

# The White Flame

BY  
MARY A. CORNELIUS

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Fed by pure ministers of love—  
Let not the flame die out.

—*Carpenter*

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MARIE SMELLING WITH HER MIND.



# THE WHITE FLAME.

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## CHAPTER I.

Some one was sitting in my chair! The chair was a recent purchase from a dealer on whose sign was a pictured hand preceded by the word "Second" and followed by "Store."

My grandfather was an antiquarian, and I am a victim of the inexorable law of heredity. I adore an object touched by the rust of ages. I believed, when the chair came into my possession, I had found such—although the Israelite who beguiled me into emptying my purse for it could not positively affirm that it was landed from the Mayflower. He declared he could produce evidence proving it was in existence in the "old country" generations before the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Deep hidden secret was the reason he could afford to sell it so "scheap," and if not satis-



fied, I might return it and he would refund half the "prize" I had paid.

The antique curiosity in question had stood in the corner of my sleeping apartment since morning, and whenever during the day I chanced to enter the place where this late addition to my furniture lent its charm, I feasted my eyes upon it with unmingled pleasure. Massive in structure was it, and nearly square the seat, from which the back rose high in perpendicular exactitude. On its topmost brace of hard dark wood was beautifully carved the coat-of-arms, presumably, of its original owner, a lion rampant its distinguishing feature. Great arms, invitingly extended in straight lines, also bore marks of the genius of the carver, as did the well-braced legs; but like the war-scarred veteran who has escaped with his limbs, the old relic bore abundant evidence of its battle with Time.

With the eagerness of a lover looking forward to an interview with his mistress, I waited for evening, when I might enjoy a season in the embracing arms of my treasure; but the unexpected presence of friends kept me until a late



hour. It was long past my usual time for retiring when I entered my room, knelt and offered my nightly devotions without once glancing at my precious possession. When at length I turned my eyes in that direction, some one was sitting in my chair!

A faint cry of surprise escaped me.

"Are you afraid?" asked the figure, in a kindly, reassuring voice, which accorded well with his appearance of dignified old age.

"No," I replied, quickly recovering myself. "But who are you?"

"I am the First Owner of this chair," replied the figure, changing his position to one of easy indolence, "and I always occupy it shortly before the midnight hour!"

Although his tone was conciliatory, and it occurred to me that he might be acting under compulsion, yet I could not but regard the speaker with a touch of indignation that in a measure counteracted the awe which his venerable presence inspired; for he had, to my mind, unceremoniously taken possession of my property, and purposed appropriating it to his use on future occasions.



Belonging evidently to a generation of the past, his dress indicated the fashion of a century ago—a sleeved tunic of scarlet, gold laced, and confined at the waist by a girdle. An ample velvet mantle worn over this, partially concealed the outlines of his form, but, falling open in front, displayed the cross gartering of his hose, and low shoes encasing his feet. Abundant hair of snowy whiteness swept his broad shoulders, and ripples of long silken beard lay upon his breast like a drift of snow. He glittered with jewels. They hung from his well-formed ears, clasped his girdle, fastened his mantle, sparkled upon his shapely white fingers, and were on the buckles of his shoes. Above all this bewildering brilliancy, his deep set eyes shone like two violet sapphires, and in their translucent depths was an expression of settled regretfulness which appealed to my sympathies and modified my resentment, making it possible for me to say, “Had I known what you have told me, I should not have bought the chair.”

“No, but Nathan knew it,” he said sorrowfully. “Nathan, who sold it to you, is not hon-



est as he should be. He has sold this chair to hundreds, and all have returned it, receiving from him half the price paid."

"The cheat!" I ejaculated hotly. "I will not put him in the way of adding to his ill-gotten gains. He shall never own that chair again."

My strange visitor sighed. "Nathan is surely a fit subject for your prayers," said he.

"Prayers!" I repeated, "I have just offered prayers for my parents and sister, and all whom I love, but who would think of asking a blessing on such a cheat?"

"I know of One," was the answer, "who prayed for wrong-doers 'Father, forgive them.'"

During the brief silence that fell between us, my visitor raised his eyes to the clock on the mantel.

"Ten minutes of twelve," said he, "and I am to leave at midnight, for I am appointed to convey an infant soul to a country far away."

"O, tell me of that far country!" I cried.

"Not now. While the chair remains I must



come every night, and we may converse, but not in the presence of others. Only the owner of the chair can perceive my presence. To all others I am invisible."

The clock struck twelve. A white flame flashed before the chair and left it vacant.

## CHAPTER II.

In common with the human race, the seed of superstition is within me, and although unconscious of having experienced fear or dread of him who claimed to be the First Owner of my chair, during our interview, the instant he disappeared cold shivers shook my frame. Though physical demonstration of the strain upon my nerves was soon overcome, my mind was in a whirl of excitement which banished sleep. Tumultuous speculations rioted in my mind concerning the strange personage who had forced himself into my presence, or been forced to come—I knew not which—with all the possibilities involved in future visits.

Not for an instant did I harbor the idea of attempting to prevent his coming by removing the chair, but I resolved that our nocturnal interviews should remain a secret between ourselves, for a time at least. I confess a feel-



ing of relief when I considered that my little sister, Marie, who was my usual bed-fellow, was to return home the following morning from a few days' visit in the country, and would be present in my room when my expected guest should appear, even though she would probably be fast asleep. My tenderest love was lavished upon her and all sisterly duties, performed for her a pleasure. I delighted especially sitting by her bedside, listening to her nightly song—for she always sang herself to sleep—and to her prayer which I had taught her. This brought to my remembrance that the wraith had recommended Nathan, the cheat, as a subject for prayer. Prayer "for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" had been taught me since childhood, but this was my first real test by this sacred text. Though at first disposed to rebel, I could only acknowledge its justice. Before having learned of Nathan's depravity, I had always performed my religious duties. But this was a severe test.

Sleep snatched in the early morning, however, calmed my perturbed spirit, and when the



breakfast bell awoke me, I was unconscious of the resentment which still lurked in my unforgiving heart. In truth, as I looked at the innocent cause of my enforced vigils, I wondered if my visit from the First Owner was not all a dream, and poor Nathan's crime wholly imaginary. Before the question was settled to my entire satisfaction, the door was flung open and my little sister bounded joyfully into the room, sprang upon the bed and threw her arms around my neck.

"Oh, Frank!" she exclaimed, "I could just hug you to death! I'm so glad to see you. I haven't had anybody to kiss me to sleep, or hear me say my prayers and sing my songs, as you do, and I've been awfully lonesome nights. But the days—oh, the days, the glorious days! Romping in the daisy field! Why, Frank, there's a whole field on the farm, as big as this city, full of daisies. I wish you could see it. Oh, my! It looks as if the stars had all tumbled down there. And you ought to see the trees in the orchard, Frank, and—why, Frank, where did that big chair come from?"

Marie, for the first time, noticed my treasure,



and as I answered laconically, "I bought it," she hopped from her perch on the bed to examine the chair. The coat-of-arms attracting her attention, she climbed into the seat saying: "I must see the lion on the back," and having satisfied her curiosity, nestled quietly down between the arms.

After a while, observing her calmness I asked: "Did your early drive tire you, Marie?"

"O, no!" she replied, "I am not a bit tired, but I feel lazy, and I've felt so ever since I sat here. I don't want to get up and I don't want to do anything! I just know who sat in it last though!"

"Who?"

"Why, Aunt Susan, of course! She always makes the chair she sits in feel this way to me. It catches her feelings and gives them to me. I know, Frank, things that people sit on and handle do this, for I've tried a lot of chairs and sofas and they all feel differently."

"Some are hard and some are soft?" I suggested.

"No, no; I don't mean that! I mean everybody leaves something where they go, that we



cannot *see* but we can *feel*. I believe Aunt Susan was in this chair last."

"No, Marie, Aunt Susan has not been in this room since I bought the chair."

The aunt alluded to, was my mother's foster-sister and her original small property had accumulated in the hands of my grandfather to a handsome sum. She had never married, and, being without kindred, often intimated she would leave her property to my mother with whom she now made her home. Her love for ease was her most prominent characteristic.

It occurred to me while Marie was so positively asserting her opinion as to the last occupant of the chair, that the pose of the child and of its first owner was similar to the restful attitude in which I had often seen Aunt Susan. Moreover, a mental comparison of the features of all strongly suggested a family resemblance.

A second summons to the morning meal interrupted my train of thought and the busy day which followed nearly banished it from my mind. But when Marie's dreaded bed-time came and the spoiled little thing was being coaxed into compliance, she again called up the



subject by saying, with a saucy toss of her curly head; "I'll go to bed after you let me sit in your new chair."

My consent gained, with the proviso that she would confine herself to a five-minute indulgence, she gayly tripped after me, up the winding stairway to our room and planted herself in the coveted seat.

"Now, Frank," said she, "I'll count sixty, five times, and then I'll undress."

It was fully ten minutes before the little witch had drawled out "sixty" for the last time and the prolonged sigh which followed trenched largely on another sixty seconds, which she was bound to stretch to the utmost limit before commencing her customary dilly-dally process of disrobing. This she invariably began, as was her habit when about to make a dreaded effort, with the sage remark "If I must I must," and having so delivered herself she stooped to unlace her shoes.

One slender foot was at length bared and rested on the rug in front of the chair, and as she drew off her other stocking she remarked, "I think I'll hang my things on the arm of the



chair and lay my dress and skirts on the seat and let them soak all night in the feeling Aunt Susan left there."

"I reckon," she continued, carrying out her plan, "if any cunning little elves did hop from under the daisies and hide in my ruffles, they could snuggle right down here and not have to go to bed as I do!"

Saying this she looked mournfully in the direction of our couch and, after a moment's hesitation, started toward it remarking: "If I must I must!"

Her prayers being said, her head soon rested upon her pillow, which she begged me to share with her.

"Please, Frank," she said, "lie down here until I sing myself to sleep. I always see strange faces in the dark but when you are here I'm not afraid."

Her pleadings won me and, my previous night's rest having been broken, sleep quickly overcame me.



## CHAPTER III.

I awoke about midnight. The first object that met my view was my visitor of the previous night snugly ensconced in the chair where Marie's stockings were dangling from the arms, although her other articles of dress were concealed by his figure. He was arrayed in the same garments and jewels which he wore the evening before. His face turned toward the clock and his lips moved as if counting the seconds. As I lay watching him, for a moment hesitating what course to pursue, he looked suddenly around and shot a piercing glance into my staring eyes. "Too late!" said he, "Sleep on; take your rest. I shall be in the chair to-morrow night."

As before, and as afterward, he disappeared in a white flame. It was twelve o'clock. I went to the chair in which remained Marie's garments, heaped in the same orderly pile she had left then. Not a fluted flounce had been



crushed, nor was there any indication that the lightly deposited articles had been subject to the slightest pressure. Indeed, the little girl herself, who was the perfection of order, indulged in many self-congratulations the next morning on her fortunate selection of what she called the "chair wardrobe." "For," said she, "a chair-wardrobe is the most *convenientest* in the world. Nobody wants to sit in it, and there is no door to open, and my dress isn't crowded and mussed."

"There's another thing, Frank," she continued, mysteriously rolling up her blue eyes at me as she tugged at an unruly button, "That chair is full of something I can feel and I want it to get into my clothes, 'cause I like it."

"O, you are imaginative," I said.

"What's that?" she asked quickly.

"Why, you said last night you saw faces in the dark when you were alone. You don't really see faces but you think you do. That is being imaginative."

"How do you *know*, Frank, I don't see faces in the dark?"

"When you are older and can understand



better I will explain to you how I know," was my reply.

"Then will you tell me how you know the chair doesn't feel to me as I think it does, Frank?"

"I'll try, Marie."

She was silent for a moment before propounding the question: "Say, Frank, did you ever think you saw something you didn't see, or felt something you didn't feel?"

My ambiguous answer, "I am not imaginative, Marie," did not satisfy the little investigator, and she responded in a disappointed tone: "I wish you had said 'yes' or 'no'; I like a *sure* word."

"But suppose I am not quite sure?" I said soothingly.

"Oh, my! Haven't you sat in your new chair yet? Try it, Frank, try it this minute! I'll just push you into it."

Suiting the action to the word, she made the attempt, in which I laughingly acquiesced.

"Now, Frank, tell me, honest, don't you get a still, creeping feeling like you never had before?"



"I am very comfortable," I said, ignoring her question, for I was unwilling to admit, even to myself, the strange languor I experienced on coming in contact with the chair.

"Oh, Frank, you won't own it, but you are just the least little bit imaginative too; now aren't you, honest, aren't you?"

Standing in front of me, her bare arms akimbo, her bright countenance was aglow with expectation, awaiting my answer.

Always showing a peculiar sensitiveness to the subtle influences which are the concomitants of human character on one of her impressional nature, I could not deceive her, had I wished. She further impressed this fact upon me, when, observing my uneasy silence, she said: "You don't like to say 'yes,' do you, Frank, 'cause you think, it's foolish to be 'maginative?"

I did not deny that she had in part read my secret thought, and answered: "You haven't guessed quite right, Marie, but I'll give you all day to guess again, and we'll talk it over when you go to bed."

It is doubtful if the subject crossed Marie's



mind again during the day, for a children's party which she attended absorbed her attention, and she was so thoroughly fatigued when she retired at night that sleep overcame her in the midst of her drowsy song.

Weary myself, for I was a teacher of music and some of my pupils had been more trying than usual, I almost envied the innocent sleeper, by whose bedside I sat, her care-free repose, she being the only member of our family so favored.

My father, an attorney, had been a confirmed invalid for years, and during that time mamma had comfortably maintained him and her two daughters by a few select boarders, having ample accommodations. Therefore it was a relief to her when my musical education was so far advanced as to enable me to become self-supporting. Proud of my financial independence, I seldom consulted my prudent mother concerning my expenditure. To this lack of filial duty was due the imposition practiced upon me by Nathan, of whose unforgiven trickery I was reminded as I looked toward my inviting chair. I would gladly have rested



there but for the dread of usurping the claims of another now probably on his way to redeem his promise of the night before. I sat still and waited the coming of the First Owner of the chair.



## CHAPTER IV.

Long time were my eyes fastened on the vacant chair. Suddenly it was occupied by the expected visitor. He simply appeared in it. I did not see him enter the room nor did I see him take his seat. I only knew he was there; and without ceremony he immediately addressed me: "Have you offered prayers for Nathan?"

Now, I regarded myself as very religious, and his question annoyed me, as it seemed to imply a doubt of my having performed the duty he had suggested, and to which I was little inclined. I was impatient to hear of his world, so I made no excuses but simply answered, "No."

He sighed, and said, "Neglect of duty is the bane of spiritual life!" Sighing again, he continued, "Had I done my duty, I would not now be compelled to occupy this chair."

His remarkable statement diverted me from



asking information, exciting my curiosity to such a degree that I hastily replied: "Have you any objection to telling me to what duty you allude?"

"No," he replied, "but the story is a long one and would occupy all the time I shall be at liberty to give you for a long while."

"I should like to hear it," I persisted.

"Shall I begin now?" said he, settling back in the chair.

"I would like to know first," I said, remembering that I might learn that for which I thirsted, "about the far country to which you conveyed the infant soul."

"My story," said he, "leads to the very confines of that country, and I will tell you all that I am permitted to; there will be ample time, if you have determined to keep the chair."

"But," said I, intent on fathoming at least one mystery, "you will be so long telling your story, that I would like to ask one question before you begin."

"Speak on," said he.



"Why did a white flame blaze up so I could not see you leave?"

"That," said he, "represents the White Flame of Mercy. It flashes up whenever I am leaving the chair. Although invisible to all except the eyes of the one who owns the chair and can see me, it always burns. The White Flame of Mercy always burns!"

"Pardon my impatience," I said, yet I felt sure my tone betrayed satisfaction at having learned something concerning the White Flame.

"You are excusable," was the kind reply. "It is hard for youth to know patience."

"Frank!"

My little sister was sitting up in bed rubbing her eyes. "Frank," she repeated, "who are you talking to?"

I was bewildered and silent.

"The child can not see me or hear my voice," said the person in the chair.

Reassured, I said, "Lie down and go to sleep, Marie; you have been dreaming."

"But I heard you speak, Frank. Is Aunt Susan here? I feel as if she were."



"No, Aunt Susan is not here. Lie down and go to sleep," I said coaxingly.

"You spoke to somebody," persisted the child; "who was it?"

My truthful answer, "I don't know," was not favorably received. Her wide open eyes wandered around the room, but, unable to detect the presence she declared she *felt*, she finally crept out of bed and pushed aside the *portieres* of the alcove. Baffled in her search, she walked slowly to the haunted chair and leaned against it with her hand upon the arm. Her white night dress brushed the occupant's velvet cloak, and her hand touched the sleeve of his tunic.

"Frank," she said, "I *did* hear you speak."  
I was silent.

"Now what did you say?"

"I think I said 'Pardon my impatience.' "

"Why, Frank, you ought to have told me you were saying your prayers, and I would not have interrupted you."

"It's all right, Marie," I said encouragingly.  
"You had better go to bed now."

"O, Frank, don't ask me to go to bed until



you go with me. I'm all trembling and I feel as if there was somebody here. I can't sleep a wink without you. I know I can't."

Before I could reply, my visitor, unseen and unheard by Marie, said in a fatherly tone, "Indulge your sister. The weak should be helped."

As he was speaking Marie came and patted my cheek coaxingly and said, "Let me stay up with you, and I'll undo your hair so you will sleep the best you ever slept."

It was nearly midnight and while Marie followed her own sweet will in removing comb and pins from my hair, the White Flame flashed up, and from out of the flame came the words: "Pray for Nathan!"

Marie owned that she was imaginative, "for," said she, "it did seem for awhile as if Aunt Susan were really here and now I don't feel her at all—you talk to the chair don't you, Frank?" she asked searchingly, but I ignored her question and as the clock struck one she fell asleep beside me.

The strange relation which the chair, and Aunt Susan bore each other, in Marie's sensi-



tive mind, was a mystery that I did not at that time attempt to solve; I was disturbed that I had been exhorted to especially pray for Nathan, and for his welfare could not pray sincerely. I fell asleep in the vain endeavor to reconcile duty and inclination.



## CHAPTER V.

Sounding in my ear a voice awakened me at sunrise. It said: "Pray for Nathan!"

I opened my eyes and glanced around the room in mute astonishment not unmingled with trepidation. - A flood of golden light streaming in at the window, bathed everything in its glory, nearly blinded me, but under the influence of its heavenly sheen I experienced a sense of reassurance.

"A dream," was my mental disposal of the matter. But next instant it occurred to me that the voice which had disturbed my morning slumbers was the same with which I had become familiar in my intercourse with my nightly visitor. Involuntarily I glanced toward the chair, half expecting to see it occupied.

Although I saw no wraith and heard no audible voice, a thousand invisible tongues seemed to whisper to me, with one accord: "Pray for Nathan!"



Distracted with conflicting emotions, I sprang from my couch saying to myself: "No, no; I will never pray for Nathan! He is unworthy of my prayers!"

Immediately the whispers ceased, but I was not at rest. Although my willful decision seemed to have silenced them, I could not so easily shake off the impression of unwisdom. I stubbornly adhered to it, until, having considered it in all its bearings during the hour in which I was engaged in making my toilet, I began to waver.

I really wanted to forgive Nathan but found myself lacking in courage as I knelt in my usual place at the bedside of Marie, who lay apparently sound asleep. Suddenly the child cried out: "What's the row now?"

"Why, Marie," I exclaimed, "I am astonished to hear such an expression from you."

"Oh, that's nothing!" she replied, unconcernedly. "I heard it every day at the farm. If the chickens got into the garden, or the milk was spilled, and Mr. Peters didn't know what Mrs. Peters was worrying about, he would say 'What's the row now?' I've been



watching you out of the corner of my eye ever so long, and I know you are so worried you don't even want to say your prayers, now, do you?"

"Yes, Marie, I do want to say my prayers!"

"Then what are you standing there for with that naughty frown upon your face instead of doing what you want to do? When I feel, as you act, Frank, I always say, 'Dear Lord, please forgive me,' and I feel better right away."

"But how do you know the Lord will forgive you for feeling naughty if you don't forgive those who have been naughty to you?"

"I do forgive 'em. I forgived Jimmy Dunn when he stole my pencil and Horatio Peters when he pulled my hair and the old toy man that cheated me when I bought my doll and ——"

"Stop, stop, Marie!" I exclaimed, stung by the innocent exhibition she was making of her generous nature; "you make me ashamed of myself." Turning my back upon her I quickly left the room.

"Come back, Frank, and say your prayers,"



she cried. But I hurried out of the sound of her voice. Not long afterward she appeared in the library where I was practicing on the piano. Determined not to be ignored she lingered near my side and at an opportune moment threw her arms around my neck and whispered in my ear: "Frank, I've found a lovely place for us to say our prayers. It is right in front of your new chair. The seat is just high enough to lean on, and the bed, you know, is rather high. Then, too, the chair is so resty. You can't touch it without feeling still and good. Will you try it, Frank?"

The negative motion of my head was a rebuff so discouraging that Marie stole silently away. I next heard her voice out on the veranda addressing the young pastor of our church, whose home was with us. Him she innocently made her confidant in all matters pertaining to the religion of the family.

"I guess," she said, in a confidential tone, "Frank don't intend to say her prayers any more, for she didn't say 'em this morning and I think she ought to be spoked to about it."



"Her little sister might speak to her," suggested the wise shepherd of our flock.

"She don't want me to," was the reply. "She shook her head at me and wouldn't listen, and she didn't seem a bit afraid that the bad one would get her. She is very *dary*, Mr. Booth, she is very, *very dary*. I never saw her afraid of anything; but if she don't say her prayers to-night I shall be afraid to sleep with her. Something awful might happen. Don't you think so, Mr. Booth?"

His answer though inaudible to me evidently quieted Marie's apprehensions, for she came directly back without alluding to the subject and calmly intimated that she was ready for her morning lesson.

"I heard you talking about me to Mr. Booth," said I, ignoring her errand and looking at her searchingly.

She burst into tears. "Frank," said she, "it's dreadful for you to stop saying your prayers, and I had to speak to him about it."

"What did he say?" I asked, regarding the trembling little culprit with all the severity I had the heart to assume.



"He said—he said—your little sister might speak to you," she sobbed.

"What else did he say?"

"Why, Frank, I don't know. He used such big, beautiful words, I can't speak them but they were beautiful and they meant, that you would say your prayers again and that you were *angelical*."



## CHAPTER VI.

In my secret heart I adored Mr. Booth, Gabriel Booth he had been christened. Had the angel Gabriel himself, been a guest in our house he could not have won from me more reverence and devotion than did this beloved pastor. He was my beau ideal of manly perfection and saintly goodness. His presence inspired me with mingled emotions of awe and delight, while his good opinion was of paramount importance. Hence his kind expressions concerning me, which Marie so bunglingly repeated, changed my prayerless perturbation into a delirium of joy. I do not wish to be understood as having conceived a girlish passion for Mr. Booth, although to this day I find it difficult to analyze my feelings toward him at that time. They seem to have been—speaking with reverence—of the nature of the feelings of the Sisters of Bethany toward Jesus. It was the good within me that recog-



nized and enthusiastically appreciated the superior good within him.

My grudge against Nathan was, for the moment, forgotten, and indeed scarcely thought of during all the hours of that madly glad day. I could think only of my idol who had said I would pray again and who, shortly afterward, when I chanced to meet him in the hall, seemed not to remember he had heard anything unfavorable concerning my spiritual condition. Extending his hand, he said pleasantly: "Good bye, Frank, I shall be absent from the city for a few days as I am about starting for the country to officiate at a wedding."

Marie, who chanced to hear his adieu, flew out of an adjoining room and accompanied him to the gate. As he stooped to give her a farewell kiss, she whispered in his ear, and came running back to tell me that the very last thing she said to Mr. Booth was: "Pray for Frank."

I was too happy at the time to notice the imputation which her request seemed to imply. But after my prolonged transport of delight the reaction came which was proportionately



depressing. In the evening I retired to a quiet nook shadowed by a whispering poplar, giving myself up to torturing reflections concerning what Mr. Booth might think of me.

Not long was I permitted to indulge in the solitude I had chosen, for Marie's eager voice calling "Where's Frank?" soon floated on the breeze, and was but a moment in advance of her petite figure, which airily pirouetted to my side.

"Oh, I've found you at last, Miss Hideaway!" she exclaimed. "Something told me you were here. You know, Mr. and Mrs. Hatheway were going to buy things for their new house and mamma let me go with them. Well, we have just got back and what do you think, Frank? We went to Nathan's where you got your chair. I told them about the chair, and what curious things Nathan had, and they went there, and Mr. Nathan asked me how you liked your chair, and I told him you were delighted with it and would not part with it for the world."

"I wish the chair was in Jericho and Nathan hanged," I responded with a sudden burst of



passion, startling to Marie, who shrank away from me in dismay.

"I'm afraid of you, Frank," she cried, "I never heard you speak so before. You *must* say your prayers, Frank," she continued, after a solemn pause; "that's what ails you. If you don't say your prayers the bad one will surely get you."

"Nonsense!" was my irreverent reply, whereat the little one was so shocked she ran away.

I recalled her, saying: "It is your bedtime, Marie, and if you are afraid of me perhaps you had better go to our room by yourself."

"O, no, no! Don't ask me to go to bed alone!" she exclaimed, with a pitiful quaver in her voice which was resistless, and called forth from me a reassuring smile.

Her crooning song with which she invited sleep was on this night drawn out longer than usual and when the great blue eyes were finally curtained by the drooping lids and softly wavering lashes, the appearance of my now dreaded visitor was shortly imminent. Resolving not to give him audience, I quietly crept from



Marie's side and turned stealthy steps toward the parlor. As I passed Aunt Susan's room I saw my mother, sitting on the side of the bed on which her foster-sister was reclining. She was bending over in confidential attitude, with her lips close to Aunt Susan's sleepy ear, when I caught the words: "Marie says she talks to her new chair."

As my mother, whom I regarded as the soul of honor, had taught me to scorn eaves-dropping, I did not obey my first impulse to listen, and consequently could only conjecture that they were speaking of me.

Aunt Susan's habit was to retire early, but my mother seldom touched her pillow before the entire family was indoors. Awaiting the appearance of the loiterers she usually embraced the opportunity to go into Aunt Susan's room, disturbing that good-natured lady's first nap with a recital of her day's trials and triumphs. Aunt Susan was so in the habit of responding, "Yes, dear," to all my mother's confidences that she often said it when in a semi-conscious condition, and sometimes when apparently fast asleep.



The parlor being vacant, I lounged on the sofa until after midnight and then quite sure that my would-be visitor had vacated my chair, went to my room. Again passing Aunt Susan's door I saw my mother still in the position I had left her, and a half-smothered voice from the head of the pillow weakly breathed: "Yes, dear."

I did not see the wraith, nor did I pray that night.



## CHAPTER VII.

Mysterious providences seemed to conspire to prevent me from having further interviews with the first owner of my chair for several weeks after the events recorded in the last chapter.

The next day, my father's protracted illness unexpectedly culminated in his death. Mamma was so grieved and prostrated by the shock as to require my constant attendance at her bedside. Poor little sensitive Marie, refusing to sleep alone, had a cot in mamma's room. She was a comfort both to mamma and myself, hovering cheerfully around us by day and crooning her strange little songs at night.

She made a somewhat remarkable demonstration at the moment when our father ceased to breathe. From infancy Marie had been his almost constant companion; the broad table-like arm of his invalid chair having been luxuriously cushioned to accommodate her tiny



form, she was nestled on it many hours of each day. When she outgrew her babyhood she was still seen perched upon it, sometimes with her slender arms wound round his neck, her soft cheek resting tenderly in the hollow of his, and her dimples coquetting with his wrinkles; and at others playing cunning little pranks, that occasioned him momentary forgetfulness of his sufferings. When her primer period came, the relish for the soft arm at her father's side seemed rather to increase than diminish, for here Marie found sympathy and instruction which is usually the mother's province. Here she sat, asking such questions as emanate from the brain of precocious childhood and which the wisest of the world find difficult to answer. When the summons came for him to join the band of disembodied spirits, going we know not whither, his struggle with the flesh lasted but a moment. A spasm contracted his features, and he gasped faintly: "They have come for me."

"Who has come for you, papa?" cried Marie.

"Glory! Glory!" was his only answer, and he was gone.



"O, papa, come back, come back, don't let Glory take you," cried the child in a frenzied voice, waving her arms aloft, then losing consciousness, she fell to the floor.

Afterward, when questioned, she said: "I had been asking papa all about the spirit, the thing that makes us think, you know, and keeps us alive, and I was waiting for him to tell me how it got into the body and how it got out of the body, when all at once he rolled up his eyes and said Glory had come for him, and—I saw it! I saw Glory! I don't remember any more. It made me blind."

Her cheerfulness under the great loss she had sustained was a mystery, until one day I overheard her saying to Mr. Booth, in a tremulous voice: "I must be glad papa has no more pain, and he is happy with the Glory, if it does make me ache to live without him."

Doubtless her courageous putting away of selfish grief had its influence upon mamma's mind, and helped strengthen her to bear her sorrow, and with Marie's example before me, I experienced self-reproach whenever my tears began to flow. My resentment toward Nathan



debarred me from seeking consolation for my loss in the religion I professed, teaching as it does love for one's enemies. Through all those dark days I continued prayerless.

Dreading to meet the deep questioning eyes of him who had insisted upon my praying for Nathan, I avoided my room at the midnight hour, until my mother's health was fully restored. When Marie and I again took possession, she seemed to be literally living in divine ecstasies. No sooner had we entered the room than she fell upon her knees before the fateful chair and gave vent to her emotions in simple, childish language, which, had it not been for the hardening process of the resentment I harbored toward Nathan, would have melted my heart and better prepared me for the interview with the First Owner of the chair, which was to follow. He was in his seat ere the last note of the prolonged warble in which Marie indulged, had died away.

"She is asleep," he said, glancing at Marie and inclining his head toward me. "Shall I begin my story?"

I was not prepared for his question, for



I had intended to explain the present situation in our family and inquire if he had any knowledge concerning my father in the spirit world. I hesitated a moment before saying: "I would like to hear your story, but can you tell me first about my father who has died since I saw you?"

"It is well with your father," he replied. "The Flame of Mercy always burns. Have you prayed for Nathan?"

I was startled and annoyed by his abrupt change of the subject in which I was so deeply interested, and my heart hardening still more against Nathan, I made an answer which frightened me the moment it was uttered: "I shall *never* pray for Nathan!"

He drew a long sigh which sounded like the warning rustle in a tree before a storm.

This was followed by his saying softly: "Aunt Susan, as you call her, and Gabriel Booth, are the last in the line of my ancestors.

"Gabriel Booth—" The clock struck twelve. A flash of the white flame and I was alone!



## CHAPTER VIII.

Inaccuracies may occur in my relation of the incidents contained in the story of the First Owner of the chair, as they have long lain among memory's debris of half-forgotten things. His remarkable tale was told me in fragments, due to my many questions, and the fact of his short sittings, but as nearly as I can recall his story, was as follows:

"Gabriel Booth, as I was about to say last night, is so much younger than Aunt Susan, who is in the decline of life, he will likely outlive her. Should he die without issue, his death would release me from the bondage of this chair. I need no more sit here."

"But he will not die," I said quickly, for the mere suggestion that it was possible for my beloved pastor to die, nearly took my breath away.

"No, he is likely to live and marry and have offspring who for generations to come will



hold me here," he replied, dropping his lids as if to shut out an unwelcome vision. In an instant, however, his eyes were wide open and raised heavenward, while in a clear, triumphant voice, he said: "But the Flame of Mercy always burns!"

"Why should Mr. Booth or his offspring keep you in the chair?" I questioned, anxious to learn all possible concerning my pastor's responsibility in the matter.

"The decree, the decree," he repeated, "made it so!"

"What decree?"

"When I lived in the flesh in the latter part of the sixteenth century, King James was on the throne in England. Then it was that the decree went forth of which I am to tell you. My ease I dearly loved. While my younger brother and others of my kin were engaged in war, their armor blazing with heraldic signs, I had the family coat-of-arms carved on this chair in which I delighted to sit and receive applicants for my favor, for I was a man in authority. I sat here as you see me now, bedecked in jewels, precious gems of my ances-



tors. I was proud of them. I wore them when my neighbors were starving. Yes, when some of my own kin were in need of food. In those days there was hatred and persecutions among the religious sects, and there were outlaws even from the families of those who were called the faithful. My beautiful daughter, Cornelia, was one of those. They said she was bewitched.

"She was not bewitched—my daughter Cornelia was not bewitched," he repeated; "but she possessed wonderful powers of divination which I now understand, but of which I was then ignorant. Her prophecies have all been fulfilled. She could not only foretell events, but she had the power to project her mind to distant scenes and describe what was actually passing in places which she had never visited. She was secretly consulted by many who were persecuted for their religion and often gave valuable information for the benefit of those in peril. Because she said her religion embraced only love she was reviled and spat upon. She said, 'We are all children of one Father.' She was firm in her religion and kept close to the



bosom of the Father, loving her enemies and doing good to those who despitefully used her, and for this she was condemned to the stake. I was myself a religious bigot. Too indolent to actively persecute, I contented myself with acquiescing in the behests of others involving cruelty and wrong. When my own daughter was under the ban of persecution I was persuaded by my spiritual advisers to bow to authority higher than my own, and thus secure her salvation. I consented to the burning of her body to save her soul from everlasting fire; for I had yet to learn the soul can never burn to purification save in the flame of God's eternal love."

"Poor Cornelia," I interposed.

"Don't call her poor Cornelia," said he. "It is the sinner, not the one sinned against, who should be pitied. She was welcomed by the shining hosts. She can visit me, but I can not visit her, until the last of my race shall have departed this earth. You remember I told you who he is?"

He paused as if for an answer.

"Yes, Gabriel Booth," I murmured low.



"Cornelia," he continued, "was joined in wedlock to a man of high degree. He died soon after the birth of their only child, a son, and the last born of the generations, in the line of that son, is Gabriel Booth. Aunt Susan and Gabriel Booth, as I have before said, are all that are left of my race. Aunt Susan loves her ease as I loved mine. How often have I desired to say to her, 'Never sit in your chair when duty calls you away from it.' But her ears are not open to my voice."

Pausing, he sighed, closely scanning my features as he again mentioned the name written on my heart.

"Gabriel Booth," he said, "is like Cornelia's son, whose name was also Gabriel. Worthy of such a mother, he was a noble boy. Inheriting her sturdy nature, as well as her surpassing beauty of feature and expression, he found means to appear at her funeral pyre, and would have perished with her, but for the restraining force that was used. Tender of years was he, and helpless in the hands of her enemies, but she called to him from the flames; 'Pray for our enemies, my son, pray for our



enemies!' He said, when she had cried out thus, he saw her spirit ascend, and disappear in the clouds. Cornelia's murderers were exceedingly bitter against the boy, threw him into prison and treated him most cruelly. His mother's spirit was with him in his dungeon, strengthening him, although he knew it not. He bore his persecutions with amazing fortitude, considering his tender years. And the more they hurt him, the more he prayed for them.

"At length with the assistance of friends he escaped and was hidden in a cave where bleaching bones bore evidence that it had been the lair of wild beasts. A human skeleton was there and from the fleshless finger had rolled a ring of great value which the boy found. It is the same now worn by her whom you call Aunt Susan. An old monk from a distant monastery was his companion and instructor. He remained with him until in the course of events a price was put upon the head of his charge, then brought him to me for protection.

"He urged me to bestir myself and set a guard around the boy; but I loved my ease and



neglected my duty. Many a poor soul needed my help in those days, but I gave no heed to poverty or sorrow. I sat in this chair and looked from my palace window where I saw the afflicted pass by, and unconsciously congratulated myself on my more fortunate position. What little sympathy I experienced for others found expression only in words, or in giving the merest pittance, which I could easily spare. I never made a heroic sacrifice for any one.

“One night, the last spent in my earthly body, I sat in this chair, dressed as now. Near midnight, as I was about to retire, a gentle knock at the door arrested my attention. It was the old man who had charge of Cornelia’s son. He came to tell me that the boy was in imminent peril, and asked my assistance. I refused; whereupon the old man fell upon his knees before me and implored me, by all I held sacred, to rescue the boy. I was angry at his importunity. I spurned him with my foot.

“Rising, he drew up his aged form, clothed in skins, he towered far above me, and stretching forth his once powerful arm, with long



bony fingers at me, and uttered these words: 'Because thou hast refused to listen to the cry of the poor and needy of thine own blood, in that chair shalt thou sit and mourn every night at this hour, until the last of thy race shall have departed this life.' At that moment, a stroke of paralysis ended my earthly life."

I was just then relieved, by the flash of the white flame, of the presence of the mourner, whom I now sincerely pitied.



## CHAPTER IX.

Deserted so suddenly, I turned my blinking eyes from the chair where the unnatural light had appeared, to the bed where, to my surprise, lay Marie wide awake.

"What are you sitting there for, Frank; why don't you come to bed?" she said.

"How long have you been awake?" said I, ignoring her question.

"About a minute, I reckon. I've had a dream, Frank. It was about a boy. He——"

"O, never mind!" I interrupted, "Don't tell it to-night; go to sleep."

"It's one of my *real* dreams, Frank. It will come true. Now don't you want to hear it?"

"Not to-night, Marie; I'm tired; go to sleep, dear."

"Well, if I must I must," said she, in a disappointed tone, "but that bad boy must be got out of jail. He's so dreadfully bad, Frank, I like him."



Marie's dream as it afterward transpired, was really about a street waif of whose arrest for assaulting a companion she had heard Mr. Booth read from an evening paper.

It was Mr. Booth's habit to occasionally visit the city prisons if, perchance, he might be able to render aid and consolation to some poor soul in affliction. Marie had for some time manifested a deep interest in this phase of his religious duties, and often begged to accompany him. But having been as often assured that such places were not suitable for her to visit, she finally desisted from further importunity. The morning following her dream, she again opened the discussion. Finding, however, her appeals in vain, she contented herself with a promise from Mr. Booth that he would not fail to visit the prison, and try to secure the release of the boy with "yellow hair and big eyes," whom she had seen in her dream.

The boy, whose appearance answered to Marie's description, was before the police judge when the little girl, all breathless, appeared and took her place beside Mr. Booth, whom she had surreptitiously followed.



"Why, Marie!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

The child burst into tears.

"That's the boy!" she sobbed. "I'll give all the money in my savings bank to pay his fine," and suiting the action to the words, she walked up to the desk in front of the judge, and deposited her little tin bank.

She now saw the eyes of the judge, the criminal, and of the motley crowd, upon her, and frightened at her own bravery, rushed from the room, and was safe at home some time in advance of Mr. Booth and the boy, who accompanied him.

Master William von Heidleburg's introduction to Miss Marie took place on the veranda, and the bad boy and good little girl were left there eyeing each other, while Mr. Booth went into the house for a few moments.

Alone with him, Marie readily took the responsibility of entertaining her guest.

"Mr. William von Heidleburg," said she, "I dreamed about you last night."

"Call me Bill for short," said her companion, rather roughly.



"I would rather call you Willy, if you please. Willy is such a pretty boy's name."

"How ken I be Fightin' Bill, if you call me by that baby name?" asked the young Bohemian, with contempt in his tone.

He was a head taller than Marie and, as he drew himself up with a defiant air, he seemed to look down upon her with proud superiority. Spite of his tattered garments, Marie regarded his bold attitude with childish admiration, and there was a touch of respect in her voice when, after a moment's hesitation, she said, "What makes you fight?"

" 'Cause I like to lick 'em —— boys wot call me names."

Marie was so shocked by the expletive that she began to cry.

"Wot you cryin' fer?"

" 'Cause you swore. I want you to stay with us and mamma won't let you if you swear."

"Oh, well, I done goin' to swear no more, unless it should happen to slip out, like a rat out its hole, you know. Did you say I was goin' to git to live here?"



Before Marie could answer, Mr. Booth made his appearance, accompanied by mamma who was in need of the services of a boy.

She scanned the newcomer critically, and having learned he was a homeless orphan, offered him the position of chore-boy, which offer he gladly accepted.

Marie was commissioned to show him the way to the kitchen, and as they passed into the hall William was heard to say, "Miss Marie, I'll pay back that bank money of yours as soon as I yern it."

William set to work in the kitchen under the direction of the cook, Marie busied herself in fitting up a little room for him in the attic. She robbed her own dresser of several little ornaments, which she highly prized; and to relieve the bareness of a corner shelf draped it with one of her ruffled skirts. The walls of the room were bare, and there were no pictures she could command. So she decided to draw the picture of an angel, to hang above



the bed, "For," said she, "if William looks at an angel it will make him good."





## CHAPTER X.

Marie's William, as he was dubbed, proved a success in oiling the kitchen machinery. During his first day it moved like clock work, and thereafter his little patron divided her attention between him and her wayward sister whose nightly interviews with the First Owner of the chair she surreptitiously watched. Marie was not habitually an early riser, but any unusual excitement caused her to be up with the lark. I was not surprised, when I awoke next morning, and missed her from my side to hear her voice mingling with that of Mr. Booth. They had met in the hall and it seemed were about to descend the stairs. I could not catch the words but they evidently involved an inquiry concerning her night's rest, for I heard her say, "No, not very well, 'cause Frank 'sturbed me, talking to her chair about you and the decree, but I was too sleepy to stay awake, though I did want to know if she



said her prayers. I haven't seen her saying them yet and you said she would."

As before stated my admiration for Gabriel Booth was my own secret. Not by word or look had I ever intimated to him, or any member of the family, the state of my feelings toward him. In truth, I did not realize at the time the life-grip he had on my heart. Looking backward I now understand something of the tenacious nature of the emotions which association with one of his lofty nature develops in the heart of a susceptible young girl. I stood in great awe of him and often wondered at Marie's familiarity, acting as though he were an ordinary mortal. My mortification at the declaration which I had overheard was excessive.

"What would Mr. Booth think of my talking of him to a chair?" I asked myself with tingling cheeks. I could not deny it.

At night I warmly questioned Marie on the subject.

"O, yes," she said, "of course I told Mr. Booth and I asked him if he loved you, and he never said a word, he just turned red and the



veins on his forehead swelled up as if he were angry—but he wasn't—and I was 'sprised, for I really think he does love you."

"Why do you think so, Marie?"

"O, because my mind smells it. My mind smells the things I can't see just as my nose smells something sweet about a rose."

"Well, Marie, I hope in future you will put the nose of your mind to something more important than trying to find out what Mr. Booth thinks."

"Now, Frank, you are not angry any more than Mr. Booth was. You are just trying to be. I never saw two people before that acted as you do. You love him and he loves you and I don't see why you are both trying to make believe you don't love each other. Now, I like to tell Mr. Booth I love him. I just glorify in it. I could hardly live without him. I tell him everything. He listened with big, big eyes when I told him you spoke his name to the chair again last night, and you said, 'Did the boy pray for his mother's murderers?' I don't know but what Mr. Booth thinks about it for he never said a word, but mamma and



Aunt Susan were worried about you. I told them, and I heard Aunt Susan tell mamma that your mind was unsettled and mamma said your case must have attention. They are going to have a doctor and, Frank, it's all because you won't say your prayers. You—better—say—your——” Sleep overcame the sweet little chatterer. As I left her bedside a slight rustling sound at my door attracted my attention. I opened it and there stood mamma.

“Mamma!” I exclaimed, surprised to discover her whom I thought incapable of such an action. She did not look in the least disconcerted, but frankly stated: “I have been listening to see if you were awake, for,” said she, in an undertone, as she stepped inside, “Marie says you are in the habit of talking to your new chair at night; but I thought I would not speak to you about it until I had assured myself that she was not mistaken.”

“Well, are you sure now?” I said; my manner indicating embarrassment and displeasure.

“I am sorry you are not pleased, Frank, but do you think your poor heart-broken mother would stay awake at night and watch over you,



now that you and Marie are all she has left, if she did not love you?"

Tears were in mamma's eyes, and her voice was pitifully broken. I was silent. Her indirect allusion to my father's death had conquered my temper, but I was at a loss how to answer.

Just then Marie awoke with a start and looked around. "Why, mamma," said she, "what are you crying about?"

It was now mamma's turn to show embarrassment, and she hastily left us, without further explanation.



## CHAPTER XI.

Next morning our family physician, Dr. Jones, a tried and trusted friend, dropped in, ostensibly to make a friendly call. It devolved upon me to entertain him, mamma having excused herself for a short time, on plea of family duties. Somehow, I was not at ease, and when, after a few moments of constrained conversation, on my part, he requested me to play for him, I gladly assented with a sense of relief. Alas, I had scarcely touched the keys when Marie came rushing in, dressed for a walk.

"Oh, doctor," said she, "I'm so glad you've come to see Frank, for she keeps right on talking to her chair, and she don't say her prayers any more and she's all upset! She ought to have pills and castor oil, I'm sure; when I told Mr. Booth he looked very, *very* serious. Oh, there's Mr. Booth now. I promised to go with him for a walk. Good bye, doctor." And



Marie disappeared as suddenly as she had come.

Turning smilingly, the doctor said to me: "What does all this mean? Are you really not well?"

"I am perfectly well, I never felt better in my life."

"And you say your prayers and don't talk to your chair?" said the doctor, inquiringly.

I looked the indignation I dared not express while a hot flush mounted my face.

"Don't be hurt or offended, Frank," said the doctor, drawing his chair nearer to me, "Your dear father begged me to be a father to you when he should go, and I will be frank and tell you your mamma is worried about the state of your health, and asked me to call this morning to see if I could do anything for you."

"Thank you, doctor; I feel quite well," I said, touched by his kind manner.

"Have you been troubled lately with headache?"

"No, doctor, not at all. I feel quite well," I repeated.

"Now, Frank," said the doctor in a persuas-



ive tone, "I will not urge you to confide in me, but your mother is greatly distressed about you, and desires me to prescribe for you. She says you appear abnormally nervous during the day, and you hold nightly vigils and talk to a chair in your room. If this is the case, I can give you medicine which will quiet your nerves and make you sleep."

"I do not want to sleep, and I do not talk to my chair," I replied with emphasis. "But, doctor, as you are such a good friend, and have done so much for us, I feel that it would be wrong and ungrateful for me to deceive you. I have kept the secret that I am going to tell you from mamma, because I was afraid she would think my strange experience was all imagination and I *knew* it is not.

"I bought an antique chair awhile ago and had it put in the alcove of my room, and every night someone, who says he is the First Owner of the chair, comes and sits in it. He has been dead hundreds of years, and he tells me things that occurred while he was in the flesh. Of course, he is a spirit now, but he has the



power of making himself appear to me and no one else can see him or hear him speak."

"Well, well!" said the doctor. "This is remarkable. How did Marie find out about it?"

"She doesn't know anything about it. She thinks she has heard me talking to the chair, because I sometimes ask the First Owner questions, and that is all she knows, and that is all anyone knows about it, except yourself."

"What does Marie mean by insisting that you do not say your prayers? Does the presence in the chair interfere with your devotions?"

"Why, no; that is another part of the matter that I would rather not tell. The wraith only comes a few moments every night."

"How does he look?"

Mamma's return to the room prevented me from answering and put an end to our conversation. Soon afterward the doctor departed, leaving a powder, with directions for taking. Resenting the assumption which his prescription implied, I gave the powder to the winds, consigned the directions to the waste basket,



and went about practicing my music without the slightest twinge of conscience.

Still the doctor's call had left an uneasy impression on my mind which I could not entirely disperse. I intuitively felt that what he probably imagined to be my mental condition was giving him great concern, and although it seemed to me I was taking the proper course at the time, I began to regret having confided in him.

I wonder, if it was a premonition of coming events painful to bear, which weighed my mind, so that in a short time it became impossible for me to continue playing.



## CHAPTER XII.

Nothing soothes the troubled mind like solitude. I sought my room. On my way, I saw, across the hall, Mr. Booth's door standing wide open. Remembering he was out walking with Marie, I paused and looked in. Open upon his table lay a book, and an innocent curiosity impelled me to step forward and glance at its pages. It proved to be a photograph album, and the first picture upon which my astonished eyes rested, was a photograph of the carving on the back of my antique chair.

Impulsively I caught up the book and hurried with it to my room intent on comparing the picture with the carving. Looking from one to the other, I heard the voices of Mr. Booth and Marie. Having returned, I knew that Mr. Booth would be likely immediately to miss his album.

I was in a dilemma. If I returned the book to him, an explanation would be expected; if



I returned it surreptitiously, he might suspect me of taking it. While hesitating, I heard Marie say, "Oh, no, no, William has not taken it. He's a *grand* fighter but I know he wouldn't steal pictures. Why, he has one already. I made him an angel and hung it over his bed."

My decision was made. William should not, for a moment, rest under suspicion. I took the album immediately to its owner confessing why I had borrowed his property, and begged his pardon. He treated my plea for pardon lightly but seemed much surprised when I told him about the carving on the chair. He said the photograph was the copy of his family coat-of-arms, which on castle and armor, on shield and seal had in various ways, been preserved through many generations. He also said he was of English descent, that his parents died while he was an infant, and he was not aware that he had any relatives living. He thought he was the last of his race.

I stood in his study door during our conversation. Mamma chanced to see me there and her sense of propriety was aroused. She



called me away, and when we were alone, expressed the fear that Mr. Booth might think me bold if I allowed myself to converse with him in his room.

My foolish pride and my sensitiveness concerning the chair, checked the explanation, which I should have given, and the consciousness of harboring wrong feelings made me wretched. All my comforts seemed to have suddenly forsaken me. Mamma thought I behaved badly; probably Mr. Booth thought me bold; and there was no surmising how horrible Dr. Jones' opinion of my case might be. Aunt Susan, with whom I was a favorite, was the only person in the family of whose sympathy I felt sure, and I went to her for consolation.

As I entered her room, she was half reclining in her easy chair, and I was startled by the striking resemblance between her attitude and that usually assumed by the First Owner of my chair. Her fan lay upon her lap. It was always there in warm weather, for she rarely used it, and when she did make the effort the



result was only a wave or two which seemed to exhaust her.

"Aunt Susan," I said, "the weather is so warm I don't feel like doing anything, and I thought I would like to sit with you until time to give my lesson."

"Certainly, my dear," she replied, "we have not had many visits together of late, and I have several things on my mind I can say only to you when we are alone."

I was again reminded by her tone and manner, of the wraith, and the impression of the likeness grew as she continued to address me.

"You have always been my favorite, Frank, next to your mother, I love you better than anyone in the world. I have no kin that I know of, but sometimes I wonder if there might not be someone who would claim to be heir to my property if I should die; and I have resolved to make my will after this warm weather is over. I want your mother and you and Marie to share equally in the estate, but to you will be given all my jewels, heirlooms of our family which will probably become extinct when I die."



Aunt Susan's allusions to the time when she would be taken away drew me nearer to her and I began silently caressing her hand, which lay upon the arm of her chair, small and fair, singularly like the one which nightly rested on the arm of my antique treasure; and strangely enough I suddenly recognized, for the first time, in the old ring she wore, the facsimile of the one I had noticed on his finger. My surprise was very great.

Aunt Susan, whose thoughts were absorbed in the subject she was discussing, did not observe my agitation, and continued, with increasing emphasis:

"Property, my dear, is a sacred trust. It should be preserved in families, and I hope your children's children will be benefited by the little you receive from me. Your mother is prudence itself, and if you follow her advice you need never be in want: But don't purchase too many antique chairs!"

Conscious that her caution was intended as a gentle reproof, which amused me more than it hurt, I said playfully, "Now, Auntie Susan, you have never yet taken the trouble to climb



the stairs to see my chair and if you ever should I think you will say my money was well invested. It is a treasure!"

"Surely, my dear, if the weather should be cooler I will go up to-morrow and see your wonderful chair."



## CHAPTER XIII.

I was conscious of having suddenly become an object of more than usual interest to Mr. Booth. Several times during the day, in the parlor and at the meals, I felt the magnetism of his glances which were quickly withdrawn whenever I chanced to look toward him. It occurred to me that he might desire to further pursue the subject on which we were conversing, when mamma had called me away from his door, and that, after all he did not think me so bold, as I had feared. Nor was I mistaken. Next morning I chanced to meet him on the veranda and, being alone, he asked me if I had any objection to his seeing my antique chair.

"No, indeed," I replied, quite cordially, "I shall be glad to show you my interesting relic of your ancestors."

"Do you really think it is a relic belonging to my ancestors, Frank?"



"Why, Mr. Booth, I know it is."

"How did you gain your information?"

"It's First Owner told me so."

Mr. Booth looked mystified. "Your statement calls for an explanation, does it not?" he questioned pleasantly.

"I don't know all the particulars yet, myself, Mr. Booth. When I do, I will tell you."

"Well, I suppose I must rest content with seeing the chair for the present. When will it be on exhibition?"

"You can see it now if you will come to my room."

"Shall I follow you, Frank?" hesitatingly.

"Of course," with great assurance.

Mamma happened to be in the hall as we passed through. "I am going to show Mr. Booth my chair," I said, in answer to her look of inquiry.

She stared at me aghast. "Frank," she exclaimed, "are you crazy? I will show Mr. Booth the chair myself."

I understood instantly, by mamma's manner, that she deemed what I was intending to do not the proper thing. But why she at-



tached any impropriety to my action, I had not the remotest idea until afterward, when she unfolded to me certain notions concerning the sacredness of young ladies' apartments.

I was exceedingly mortified and ashamed to meet Mr. Booth, but when, an hour later, it was arranged for us to practice church music together at the piano, he relieved me of further distress by treating me with unmistakable respect and consideration.

While still at the piano our thoughtful family doctor called and invited me to drive with him to the country home of one of his patients, a favor I was glad to accept.

During our drive the doctor questioned me closely as to my interviews with the visitor before named, and I knew he thought me laboring under a hallucination regarding the interviews which I described.

"You know, Frank," he said, "many people have imagined they saw objects which had no existence. It is a very common thing. For instance, a friend of mine was sure she saw a cat under her table, which was not there, and she even thought she heard it mew."



"Doctor," said I, "suppose you had been through precisely my experience, could anyone persuade you it was all imaginary?"

"Certainly," said the doctor. "I should know it was imaginary, because spirits don't come back to this world and talk with people."

"How do we know they don't, doctor?"

"I know it as a demonstrated fact, that all such illusions under which you are laboring, are occasioned by an abnormal condition of the brain. If I were to see your visitor in the chair, I would say my brain was at fault."

"But, doctor, the Bible tells about spirits appearing to people, and even Christ himself appeared and talked with his apostles, after he had been crucified."

"Don't quote scripture to me, Frank; I am not posted in that line. I am presenting the subject from a purely scientific point of view, and the unsatisfactory results of the investigations which have thus far been made in occult science, force me to doubt the genuineness of so-called spiritual manifestations. Now, it is a scientific fact, that the human brain is unreliable. You sleep and dream remarkable



dreams, as real at the time as the experience you have had with your chair; but when you awake, you know there was no reality in the vision. Now, why may not your mind be sometimes in a condition for you to dream things that are unreal, when you are awake? The hypnotist controls the mind of his subject in a most remarkable manner. Psychical phenomena are a most interesting study. I confess I have not been able to give the subject the attention which it deserves at the hands of every physician. There is a private institution, however, up in what is called Green Hills, where nervous and brain troubles are very successfully treated; and I would advise you, if you cannot bring your reason to your aid in dispelling your hallucination about your chair, to put yourself under the care of the specialist in the institution at Green Hills. I will see that you are at no expense for the treatment, and it may be given out to your friends and pupils that you are away on a visit."

Conflicting emotions deprived me, for the moment, of the power of speech!

"Mental disorders, if not properly treated,



may lead to serious consequences," said the good doctor, observing my hesitation. The solicitude which was manifested in his voice and kindly eyes, touched me, mortified, indignant and distressed though I was.

"I thank you very much for your kind offer," I replied, suppressing my feelings with a great effort, "and I suppose it would be useless for me to try to convince you that my interviews with the First Owner of my chair, are not as real as the interview I am having with you at this moment, but I want to ask you why he has been able to tell me so many facts which it would have been impossible for me to discover from any other source. I did not know many of the things about Aunt Susan until he told me, and how can I account for his developments about Mr. Booth?"

"Perhaps, unconsciously, your mind may have dwelt more than usual, of late, on your Aunt Susan and possibly upon Mr. Booth."

My face flushed and I shook my head in decided denial.

Without appearing to notice my action, the



doctor continued; "I know a man whose wife disappeared and when all search for her had proved unavailing, he slept and dreamed she had been accidentally suffocated in a bin of wheat in his barn, and there they found her body. I know a woman, who in broad daylight, standing before her mirror, saw, in a vision, her husband, who was in a distant city, stabbed and killed, the same hour in which the fatal knife really was driven to his heart. Now, there is no absolute proof that either of these persons might not have had the same experience in their dreams, had their loved ones been alive and in their homes at the time.

"I once dreamed that my wife was dying and the impression on my mind was so vivid when I awoke that I arose in the night and went to a neighbor's, where she was sitting up with the sick, to find her in usual health. Had she been dying, believers in visions would have used my dream to confirm their theories."

"Marie dreams many things that come to pass," I said, "and I wonder if they are all coincidences."



"Of course they are," replied the doctor, with great assurance. "She dreams many things that never come to pass, does she not? Every coincidence between a dream and a reality, is made much of by superstitious people. You may be mistaken about the first owner of your chair stating facts. The proofs you have given me are by no means conclusive evidence, to my mind. In any event after you have taken a course at Green Hills, I think I shall hear no more about your nightly visitor."

"Doctor," said I, "I don't want to go to Green Hills. I cannot be persuaded that I am laboring under a hallucination. Have you said anything to mamma about it?"

"I have discussed the matter with your mamma, and she is anxious to have you go, and I hope you will consent, if it is only to gratify her. You owe all you have and are to your dear mother, Frank; she would lay down her life for you. Green Hills is a cool retreat where you may enjoy yourself to your heart's content during this warm weather. There is a library and a piano, and you can take your



favorite music and practice all you please. If you do not like the place, you can come home immediately."

"I will consider it," I said; and the conversation turned to other topics.



## CHAPTER XIV.

Marie came running out to meet me on my return from my drive with the doctor.

"O, Frank," said she, "William has had an awful fight—*awful!*" she repeated. "Some big boys came along where he was at work and one of them put a chip on his shoulder and dared him. I was at the window and saw it all. He fought like a tiger—William did. He pulled out hair and made the boy's nose bleed and jagged his eye and pounded him all over. I screamed as loud as I could for them to stop but I couldn't make them hear me, so I got the police whistle William gave me when he first came, and blew it and the boys ran away and left William swearing like everything. My! But it was dreadful! William has got a big scratch on his face and one of his teeth is loose, and he walks lame. I want some of your court plaster to put on his scratch; it's bleeding."



Marie followed me to our room, and, as she received the plaster for the benefit of the young pugilist, she remarked, "I'll have to draw another angel for William. One don't keep him from fighting; but, I tell you, Frank, (in a confidential tone) he *can* fight!"

I was glad Marie had found something to occupy her attention for I longed to be alone. All the doctor had said to me was whirling in my mind; but the thing that most disturbed me was his plan for me to go to Green Hills. A premonition that, in the end, I would go to please mamma, made me exceedingly nervous; and worse still, as I pondered the arguments the doctor had used to prove my visitor to be a creature of my imagination, I really lost faith in his reality.

I finally arose and walked unconsciously toward the cause of all my trouble, and was standing beside it, when Aunt Susan appeared in the open door. She had fulfilled her promise. The day was cooler and she had come.

"You see, I am here, spite of those dreadful stairs," she said, panting with the unusual effort she had made; "and now,"—coming



forward to where I stood—"I find you worshipping your idol."

"What do you think of it, Auntie?"

"It is a magnificent old relic, Frank, and looks ancient enough to have come out of the ark."

I was delighted. "Sit in it and try its virtues," I said.

"Why, it seems to me, I have seen something somewhere that was like this carving on the back," she said, examining it more critically.

"Mr. Booth has a photograph corresponding to it in his album. Perhaps that is what you have seen."

"No—let me think!" dropping her head slightly and raising it after a moment's reflection, with an air of certainty. "I know now. It was engraved on an old silver plate that I played with when a little girl. I don't know whatever became of it. Of course, I'll try the chair; that's what I made my fatiguing trip up here for;" and suiting the action to the word, she sat down in the chair.

Her attitude, the pose of her head, and her



hand resting on the arm of the chair, were all so strikingly like the peculiarities which I had noticed in the First Owner, I was filled with profound astonishment.

"Aunt Susan," said I, abruptly, "what do you know about your ancestors. You told me yesterday you thought you were the last living of your family. Now, I have my doubts about it."

"Why, my dear?"

"Because—because—" I stammered. Should I again give my secret away?

Aunt Susan forestalled my decision.

"Has your opinion anything to do with your talking to your chair? You need not hesitate to tell me. Your mamma has made me her confidant in the matter, and I agree with her, and the doctor, that you should go at once to Green Hills for treatment."

Recognizing, at once, that Aunt Susan was also in the plot to send me away, and that she had probably been sent to reconcile me to the inevitable, I looked at her in chagrined silence.

"Don't be afraid to tell me what you talk to your chair about," she said, with assuring



kindness; "Doctor Jones says your communication to him was confidential and he is not at liberty to divulge it, but Marie says she has heard you talk of me, and also of Mr. Booth, to your chair, in the night."

I suddenly resolved to tell Aunt Susan about the First Owner of the chair. She listened with amazement.

"No wonder the doctor says your case is remarkable," she said, when I had concluded; "You ought not to stay in this house another night. You are in danger of losing your mind."

"I don't believe a word of it. I don't believe I am in danger of losing my mind," I replied indignantly. "If you are all determined I shall go to Green Hills, I suppose I shall have to go; but I don't want Marie, or Mr. Booth, or anyone, to know where I have gone."

"No one but the Doctor will ever know. It is to your interest and the interest of the family that it be understood you are away on a visit."

Aunt Susan's errand having been accom-



plished, she arose, with an air of satisfaction to depart.

"This is really a very comfortable chair," said she, laying her hand, glittering with the ring of her ancestor, caressingly on the back.

I could not forbear saying, "Aunt Susan, that ring you have on, is exactly like the one worn by the person, or spirit, I have been telling you about."

She looked at me with a startled expression.

"Frank," said she, "you will have to go to-morrow. This thing is working on you."

Struck with the absurdity of her declaration, I burst into uncontrollable laughter. It is so unusual for me to make such a demonstration, it only confirmed Aunt Susan's fears for my reason, and she went away the picture of despair.



## CHAPTER XV.

I feared an effort would be made, on the part of mamma and Aunt Susan, to prevent further intercourse with the First Owner of my chair, but as I was going to Green Hills next day, my usual habits were not interfered with.

Marie was asleep, my door was locked, the keyhole stuffed, and I sat waiting for my visitor, when he appeared. He saluted me after his usual fashion, but at the same time gave me a searching look.

"You seem to be having trouble," he said.

"Yes," I replied; "shall I tell you about it?"

"I shall be glad to hear. Perhaps I can assist you."

I rapidly rehearsed all that had occurred to make it necessary for me to leave home.

"Now," said I, "is there any way by which you can convince me that you are not a creature of my imagination?"



"None of which I know," said he, "except through your inner consciousness, and that would not convince your friends."

"May I touch your sleeve?" I said.

"You may try to touch it, if you wish, but there is really no sleeve here that the human hand can feel."

He held out his arm toward me. I bent forward and attempted to touch the velvet loosely falling from it, but my finger felt nothing, although it appeared to be pressed into the rich fabric.

I trembled when I withdrew my hand, and a shiver passed through my frame.

The First Owner noticed my agitation. "It is but natural," he said, "that you should feel as you do. You are the first person who has owned the chair, to whom I have appeared, who has not exhibited signs of superstitious fear; but I am powerless to harm you, if I desired. You are a brave girl. I shall miss you, for it is seldom I have the opportunity to converse with one in the earthly body.

"All that I have told you about Mr. Booth and Aunt Susan is true. I intended to have



carried the genealogy of our family from Cornelia's son, Gabriel, down to Gabriel Booth, so you would understand all about it, but that must be deferred until we meet again.

"Aunt Susan's property should rightfully go to Gabriel Booth, but she does not know it. It is for you to tell her, and I ask you once again to pray for Nathan."

The last words had scarcely left his lips, when the white flame blazed high, and he disappeared from view.

I sat so long in my chair thinking over the remarkable statements of my visitor that I finally fell asleep and did not awaken until the early morning.

"Frank," said Marie, "what made you get up so early?"

I looked in a dazed way around the room, and it occurred to me that I had slept in my chair all night, but I wisely refrained from giving my sister a hint of the situation.

"Why don't you speak, Frank," she said; "I want to tell you my dream."

"All right; tell it!"

"Well, it was about William's mother."



"How do you know it was William's mother?"

"She told me so, and he looks just like his mother; only she is beautifuller. You know, Frank, she is an angel now. She came and bent over me and kissed me and told me to take care of William; that's all there is of it.

"I presume William's scratch is worse. It is a very deep scratch. That bad boy dug his nails in dreadfully, but I tell you William fought him back like a hero.

"William says he won't take a back seat for any boy—not if I put a hundred angels in his room. He is determined to stand up for his rights. He says he is not a bully and won't be bullied. But he's promised not to swear only when he can't help it. Now, isn't that nice of him, Frank?"

I signified my approval of William's course, whereupon Marie arose, dressed herself, and went down stairs.

Presently mamma came to my room, and before she left, plans had been agreed upon for me to leave that afternoon for Green Hills.

When Marie learned of it, she was inconsolable, and she even neglected William, who,



after all, was obliged to lay up for a few days, like a battered ship, for repairs.

Although very busy with my preparations, I found time to visit Aunt Susan's room and beg her pardon for seeming to trifle with her solicitude for my health. She understood my apology as an acknowledgment on my part, that her conjectures concerning my condition were correct, but I hastened to undeceive her.

"There is nothing the matter with me," I said. "The imagination of my friends conceive a condition that does not exist, but as it is impossible for me to convince them of their error, I intend to submit to their wishes with all the fortitude I can command. I think the time will come, when you will all acknowledge your mistake.

"When I return, I expect to learn from the first owner of my chair the genealogy of your family. You are one of his descendants and he knows all about you."

Aunt Susan regarded me uneasily, and although I intended to tell her about Mr. Booth and her property, I paused abruptly, satisfied



that what I was saying was only confirming her in her opinion that my mind was unsettled.

Adieu to my friends was a trying ordeal for me, and when I took the carriage for the depot it was no easy matter to appear natural. Mr. Booth managed to say, without being overheard, when he bade me farewell, "I hope you will pray for me, Frank."

Marie hugged and kissed me again and again, and finally shouted from the carriage to Mr. Booth, who stood in the door, "I shall kiss her a thousand times for you, too, Mr. Booth."

He did not, or pretended not, to hear as he turned and went into the house.



## CHAPTER XVI.

Green Hills, little sisters of mountains, are what their name implies, a stretch of emerald hills whose eastern slope touches one of the most picturesque valleys in the state of New York. Midway between the two highest points of rising ground, is a plateau of many acres. On this strip of table land, a mile distant from the railroad station, stands an imposing structure, known as Green Hills Sanitarium. At this place I arrived late in the evening of the day I left home. Dr. Jones, who had taken a train in advance of mine, was there to welcome me. He introduced me to the medical staff, two intellectual looking men, the elder Dr. Harvey and the younger Dr. Hamilton.

I rested well this first night, and when I awoke, my mirror reflected a face the very picture of health.

After breakfast I was introduced to the doctor's family, and a number of patients, under



my assumed name, Miss Whipple. I was then invited into Dr. Harvey's office. After answering a number of tiresome questions concerning my health, I was dismissed, and left him scratching his head. He said he would see me later in the day.

I strolled out into the beautiful grounds. Here was a ravishing scene. Trees, fountains, flowers, and birds made a paradise of an unrivaled stretch of landscape. Here and there rustic seats were scattered. Occupying one of these, presently a patient, to whom I had been introduced, joined me. She was an elderly lady, possessing a refined and interesting face; when she addressed me the tender melancholy of her voice, touched a sympathetic chord in my heart.

"I hope you will not find it dull here," she said, "we are all one family, brothers and sisters, as it were, in tribulation."

"I think I shall really enjoy my visit here," I replied, "it is such a lovely place."

"Oh, I thought you one of the patients. excuse my mistake."

"You have made no mistake. I am here



because my friends thought I needed a change of air. They imagined I was nervous."

"I believe that is the case with most of us, Miss Whipple; still there may be a few here who are really suffering from serious mental disorders. I have discovered some very peculiar cases myself."

"There is a sweet young girl here who bought an old chair, a relic of past generations, and one night she saw a ghost in it, and was so frightened she fainted, and although the fit passed off, her mind has been considered unsettled ever since. Her physicians thought the appearance imaginary, but she talks intelligently about it."

"I wonder what became of the chair?" I asked.

"Oh, that was returned to the man who sold it to her, and he paid back half the price. Do you think, Miss Whipple, it is possible for spirits to appear to us while we are in the flesh?"

"The Bible says it is," I replied evasively.

"I know it does, but some of the most celebrated physicians contend that there can be



no supernatural appearance where natural law governs. I would give all I possess, and life itself, if by any means I could bring to me the spirit of my dear son, who lately died, and hear him say, 'Mother, I am happy.'

"My church doctrine is that they who die in unbelief, as he did, will be consigned to endless torment. The thought drives me mad. I suffer unutterable anguish every moment, although I can not really believe he is lost, and yet the fear haunts me. It seems to me I would die of joy if I could but know he has found happiness where he is, for he had but little of it here."

Her eyes were dry, her grief too deep for tears. I knew not what to say to comfort her and was silent.

"It is well I came here," she said, after a moment's pause, "for Dr. Hamilton has given me some hope. He claims that the good Father disciplines his children to draw them to Him, and He could not be a kind father if He punished a soul except to make it better. He thinks that ultimately every prodigal will be welcomed home. But I have suffered so much



from a different belief I can not help letting it torment me. The doctor says when my reason is again in a healthy condition I will be content to leave my son in the hands of my Heavenly Father; but, oh, if I could only *know!*"

"In what unbelief did your son die?" I questioned.

"The doctrines the church teaches," was the reply.

"Did he believe in a God?"

"He once wrote me he intended to live a better life, 'God helping him,' but he kept on doing just the same."

"Have you told Dr. Hamilton about the letter?"

"No."

"Then I would tell him. I don't know how to talk to you, but a good doctor would know."

She looked pained. "I have intruded my sorrow on a stranger, I know, and I beg pardon," she said as she moved away.

I called after her, "I am glad I have met you. I hope we shall become further acquainted."



She bowed acquiescence and her face seemed to lighten a little.

Not long after our interview, I saw my new acquaintance in close conversation with Dr. Hamilton, his voice was clear and ringing, as I distinctly heard him say to her, "God is love," and that was the balm he was applying to heal the hurt of the poor woman's mind.



## CHAPTER XVII.

God is love, are three little monosyllables which comprise the first lesson of thousands of Sunday school children in Christian lands. It is a lesson apt to be forgotten amid the cares of this busy world. First written by the pen of inspiration; spoken by Dr. Hamilton to another and reaching my ear on the waves of sound, they comforted me as they must forever comfort the human heart.

It was the message I was pining for, spite of my waywardness, spite of my refusal to pray for Nathan. Our wise young practitioner came to me in the afternoon, and stated that Dr. Harvey had been called away to attend a relative. Before leaving they had held a consultation, and it was thought advisable that my chair, about which Dr. Jones had told them, should be sent to Green Hills.

"Dr. Harvey," said he, "has been puzzled in diagnosing your case, and we would like to



watch the effect upon your nerves of the communications which you will have with——," he hesitated.

"With the First Owner of the chair?" I said, prompting him.

"With the First Owner of the chair," he said. "Would you object, Miss Whipple, to telling me all about these communications?"

"No, indeed, doctor; as I am here to be disillusioned, it is your privilege to know the whole story," and I proceeded to relate my experience.

He seemed interested, but only said, "Shall we send for the chair?"

Having gained my consent, it was arranged that he should correspond with Dr. Jones, and I with mamma, upon the subject.

Much to the doctor's disappointment, the word came that the chair was sold the day after I left home. Mamma had returned it to Nathan, he having paid back half the price, and he, Nathan, sold it immediately to an unknown party who could not be found.

For myself, I highly resented the liberty that had been taken with my property, and,



alone in my room, I gave myself over to a fit of uncontrollable temper.

When the violence of my passion had somewhat subsided, I bethought me of Marie's letter, which was enclosed in mamma's. She had laboriously printed the few lines it contained, which ran as follows:

MY DEAREST DEAR DARLING FRANK  
WILLIAMS SCRATCH IS BETTER.  
HE SAYS HE IS MOST IN FITIN ORDER  
MR. BOOTH HAS GONE TO THE JALE  
DO YOU SAY YOUR PRAIRS  
YOUR LOVING MARIE.

The reading of even Marie's affectionate note did not extinguish the smouldering fire of my anger. I felt I had been wronged and treated like a child, and I regretted having consented to being sent to Green Hills. I remembered I would arrive at what is called "of age" for girls, on my next birthday, and be no longer compelled to submit to the control of friends. I hastily resolved I would not return home until that time. I would hide



myself in some distant city, where I could not be found. If nothing better should offer, I recklessly planned to conceal my identity in boy's clothing.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

My rash determination not to return home strengthened. I laid many plans to escape and conceal myself, but doubts as to the feasibility of any one of them continually tormented me. I was acting against my conscience but I stubbornly refused to yield to its warnings. I continued to refuse to say my prayers, and Mr. Booth's last request passed unheeded, as far as spoken words were concerned, but if the heart's desire is prayer, I prayed constantly for his weal. The First Owner of the chair had said Mr. Booth was the rightful heir to Aunt Susan's property, and Aunt Susan did not know it. My mind could not rest, and I decided to write her and make all the facts known before I attempted to hide myself. I did so and received the following reply:—

My Dear Frank:

I had hoped by this time the hallucination



under which you were laboring when you left home would have been dispelled, but I see by your letter, your trouble is growing worse instead of better. I have no doubt when Dr. Harvey returns, his experience will suggest remedies that will be the means of restoring your mind to its normal condition. Meantime, try, dear Frank, to use your reason, and do not dwell on the foolish statements you imagine were made to you by someone who has no existence.

I shall leave my property as I told you I would, and I sincerely trust you may be in a condition to enjoy your share of it when it shall come into your possession.

You are a good, generous girl, Frank, but you must remember what I have told you before, that property is a sacred trust, which should be preserved for the benefit of one's progeny, but as I have no kin, mine must go to the children of my heart.

Your mamma sends love. Marie is busy hemming a handkerchief for William's birthday. She seems to be really christianizing that heathenish boy. I am often actually



fatigued listening to her account of the things she is doing for others. I fear she will be a fanatic when she is grown.

I hope to receive an early answer to this and that you will be able to tell me that Dr. Harvey and your own good sense, have put you in condition to warrant your coming home. We all long to see you.

Your affectionate Aunt Susan.

---

I never answered Aunt Susan's letter, but resolved to make a desperate effort to escape from Green Hills, before Dr. Harvey should return. He had now been absent over two weeks, and during this time I had made the acquaintance of all the patients, and become very much interested in a number of them.

My interest in the mesmerist and the mourning mother, who had become almost inseparable companions, was unabating. Dr. Hamilton, with whom I had become very friendly, called all psychical experiences illusions. He said, "In the treatment of patients who see visions, I have become convinced that all such illusions are the result of disorders of the



brain. If I were to see one myself, I would not change my opinion. I would distrust myself.

“If we could have had your chair, I think by this time you would have doubted the reality of the visits which it seemed to you took place, and probably if the chair were to again come into your possession, you would have no more visits from its First Owner. When Dr. Harvey returns we will have another consultation on your case, which I do not regard as serious enough to warrant a change of the remedies which have been prescribed.”

I had drugged the flowers beneath my window with every drop of medicine furnished me.

Being anxious to learn his opinion of the young girl's condition, who had seen a ghost in her chair that had so frightened her I questioned him, but he waived the subject and I could get no satisfaction.

She had herself told me about it, and judging from her description of the chair, I was convinced it was the same chair Nathan had afterward sold to me. She looked wild when



I asked her about the appearance in the chair, and I pursued the subject no further.

Her mind ran on making her escape from the sanitarium, and going to her mother. She confided to me that she had tried it several times but had been caught and brought back.

I wondered if the patients were watched, and if I would succeed in getting away.



## CHAPTER XIX.

My plans to escape were all completed, and my duty to mamma, when I considered it in all its bearings, impelled me to write her before I should attempt to put them into execution. After supper, I sat down to my difficult task. I wrote and re-wrote my parting words, for hours, but nothing I could say satisfied me. A great struggle was going on in my mind, but the resolution I had taken was not conquered. The unsatisfactory letter which I finally sent, read as follows:—

Green Hills, Aug. —, 18—.

My Dear Mamma:

I have determined not to return home for at least a year. I am going to leave the sanitarium surreptitiously and hide myself, so, it will be impossible to find me. I intend to go abroad, and when my friends inquire after me you can say I have gone abroad to study music.



You will know how to manage it, if you do not wish to tell all the facts, which you might think disgraceful. *I will not disgrace you and I will return, if I live.*

A year will soon pass and then we shall all be together again. I think I am acting for the best, under the circumstances. Tell Aunt Susan not to blame me. Of course, Marie and Mr. Booth need not know.

I leave it to your judgment to make matters smooth for my return. I shall mail this letter when I start, so that no clue to my whereabouts may be discovered. My assumed name will protect you from the publicity which might otherwise follow my act.

My dear mamma, forgive me.

Frank.

---

Scarcely had my letter been sealed and addressed, when the cry of "fire" attracted my attention. I hastily thrust the letter into my bosom, and rushed into the corridor. The hour was late and all the inmates had retired. The place was black with smoke and I knew the building was on fire. My first impulse was



to embrace this favorable opportunity to slip away unnoticed, and I returned hastily to my room, secured my hat and purse, intending to go to the depot, a half mile away, and catch the midnight train. But loud cries from the story above attracted my attention, and I went to the rescue of those who were hemmed in by smoke and flame. Having assisted in conducting the last trembling woman down the escapes, I found my way to the ground by the same means. Unnoticed in the confusion, I made my way to the depot just in time to drop my letter in the mail box and jump aboard the train as it was moving out.

When I looked back at the place from which I was fleeing, it was enveloped in smoke and flames, and from the cupola shot up fiery tongues that licked the clouds. My farewell was a shudder!

I traveled until I reached New York City. I went immediately to a barber's, where I ordered my hair cut like a boy's. This being done, to my satisfaction, I proceeded to a clothing store, where I selected a boy's suit



throughout, which, giving my own measure, proved a perfect fit.

Having waited in my hotel until the dusk of evening, I arrayed myself in my new outfit, and walked boldly out, without attracting special attention. I now felt free. I had visited the city before and knew where to find a respectable location. I walked a long time for the pleasure it gave me. The lightness of my apparel was a source of strength. With no skirts to weigh me down I felt light enough to fly. I looked with pity on every woman I met switching her skirts around her ankles. Does a man's dress engender in him a sense of superiority over the less favored petticoat-weakened part of humanity?

With no matured plans I was looking for a chance to visit England. I had a snug little sum of money, which I had saved up, in my pocket.

Buoyed up by hope, which ever reigns in the heart of youth, I made my first effort to add to my little store. But the dollar which I expended advertising as a music teacher, might as well have been thrown into the street, for



nothing came of it. Two persons answered it by sending for me, but my youthful appearance was against me, and I could give no references.

I then answered an advertisement for an agent to sell an article which "would sell itself," and the canvasser would make several hundred dollars a month. I started out on this business, my feet shod with the gospel of money-making. The article did not sell itself, neither could I, by reciting a printed rigmarole, which had been furnished me, and adding my own eloquent appeal, sell it. For days I tramped from house to house without earning enough to pay my board. I learned for the first time some of the temptations which beset the mariner sailing the business sea.



## CHAPTER XX.

Failing in my first attempt at canvassing, I next became a book agent. In this, having hit upon a popular work, I was more successful; but my fullest expectations were not realized. Money did not come in fast enough to make it possible for me to carry out my eager desire to go abroad, but I was bound to hold to my engagement until more remunerative employment was found.

Trudging along a by-street one day, foot-sore and weary, with my sample copy in my hand, I met a strange looking woman who, as she peered critically under my broad brimmed hat, said, "Are you selling a book, boy?"

"Yes, madam, would you like to buy?" was my quick response.

"Here is my card," said she, "come to my apartments in half an hour and I will talk with you about it."

I knew the place to which the address on the



card directed me, and at the appointed time, I stood before the door on which was printed in gilt letters "Conservatory of Music." The building was large and I was shown into the woman's apartments, which were in one of the wings. There, in an ante-room, I awaited her pleasure.

On the table lay a newspaper, which I took up. Glancing casually over its columns, my eyes fell upon the following heading: "Green Hills Sanitarium Burned to the Ground. All the Patients Except One Rescued." Then followed a graphic account of the conflagration at Green Hills. The name of Miss Whipple figured largely as an example of heroism in assisting the patients down the fire-escapes. It was supposed she had returned to her room, perhaps to secure valuables, and had been overtaken by the flames, as she could not be found. Great regret was expressed at her tragic death, for she had endeared herself to the officers and patients during her short stay in the institution.

I was so absorbed in reading the article, I did not at once notice the quiet entrance of my would-be patron. She, however, called my



attention to herself by saying, "Boy, you were at Green Hills at the time of the fire!"

I was paralyzed with astonishment, and looked at her in dismay. She repeated her words in an interrogatory tone.

I still stared into her black compelling eyes. She was a weird looking creature. The features of her wrinkled face were prominent and irregular. When she was speaking her large mouth twisted and jerked, although her expression was not bad, and reminded me of a mesmerist I had met at Green Hills. She had brought something uncanny into the atmosphere of the place, and instead of answering, I unconsciously seized my hat and book to depart. The woman knew I could not leave, for the spring lock in the door held me prisoner when I attempted to open it.

I turned sharply upon her, "I do not intend to answer you, madam," I said, "and you will oblige me by letting me out."

As I spoke, I noticed, for the first time, the sign "Clairvoyant" on the door of the inner room.

"If you insist upon it," she replied, "I will



let you out, but you will go against your best interests. I have been searching for you ever since the fire at Green Hills, for that night I saw all you did as plainly as if I had been present. I saw you leave, but lost track of you after you started for New York. I thought when I met you to-day I might be of assistance to you, for a brave gi—boy like yourself, should not lack friends; I want to buy your book."

I dropped into my chair again and handed her my sample copy.

"Oh, never mind!" said she, returning it without opening it, "I'll take a book, anyway; but do you intend to continue in this business?"

"Yes, madam, until I find something better."

"Would you mind telling me what you would like most to do?"

"To go abroad and study music."

She smiled, and instead of relaxing her mouth, drew it into closer puckers.

"Do you know who I am?" I said, beginning to feel more at ease.

"I do. And I know at Green Hills you passed as Miss Whipple."



"Well, madam," said I, "if, as you say, you would like to be of assistance to me, you can serve me best by keeping the secret of my being alive to yourself."

"I will comply with your request, although detectives might offer me a large reward to deliver you into their hands," she said, significantly.

"Do detectives consult you?" I asked, glancing at the sign on the door.

"Frequently," she replied, "they are my best customers."

"You remind me of a mesmerist whom I met at Green Hills," I said.

"Yes, a relative of mine was there. I advised her to go. Psychic power is often a premature development, and there is not a corresponding poise in the individual to enable him to use the power wisely. Strong desire, rightly directed, will compel its own fulfillment.

"Now, if you want to go abroad, say to yourself, 'I am going abroad,' and let not a doubt intrude. Look only for the fulfillment of that



wish; require it, expect it, and you will have it."

"I don't understand how I can require anything like that to come to pass," I said.

"Nor do I," said she, "all I know is it can be done. There are forces I can compel to do my bidding. You shall go to Europe as you desire, how or when I can not say, without a sitting, but go you shall, if you will do as I have directed."

"*I will go to Europe,*" I said, with impressive emphasis, and a hopeful smile, as I arose and turned toward the door.

"If you have time before you leave, call upon me again," said the woman as she let me out.

I thanked her for her kindly interest, told her I would deliver her book, and went away feeling quite sure that I would go to Europe. Was I hypnotized?



## CHAPTER XXI.

"A runaway," was the cry, and sure enough, there it came, dashing toward us. A scared little white face looked out of the carriage window, as the madly plunging horses veered toward the lamp post, by which I stood. One trailing line caught in some unaccountable way, and wound around the post, and before it snapped, as it did in an instant, I had thrown myself forward, and caught desperately at the bits. Here I swung for nearly a block, when my weight, dragging upon their tender, bitted mouths checked them.

I was stunned and confused when I let go my hold and stood on my feet, scarcely realizing what I had done. The coachman had been thrown from his box and instantly killed.

By the rash impulse of a moment I was a hero in the eyes of the occupants of the carriage, and the crowd that gathered around it.

Alighting in breathless haste the owner of



the carriage inquired for "the boy who stopped the horses."

A boy who had been the first to congratulate me called out, "He's here, sir, pretty well knocked out, I reckon!"

Perceiving I had not yet recovered myself sufficiently to appear to advantage in the interview which the gentleman sought, the boy took it upon himself to be spokesman for me, and all he knew was promptly told.

The affair resulted in my becoming the protégé of the person who was pleased to call me a courageous boy.

Next day I was installed as music teacher to his young daughter, who was driving with him at the time of the accident.

The family, who had thus strangely become my fast and grateful friends, consisted of Judge Cecil Bennett, his invalid wife, and daughter Bernice, a frolicsome creature who had lately entered her teens. Judge Bennett was a man of commanding figure and imposing presence. A massive brow overhung his deep-set gray eyes, and his hair was black and glossy. I thought him the handsomest man I had ever



seen, with the exception of Mr. Booth, who was of the blond type, tall, straight, and majestic. The two men were as different in character as they were in personal appearance.

Mrs. Bennett was wheeled into the room in her invalid chair, and presided at the first music lesson I gave Bernice. I was favorably impressed with her gentle greeting, and deep solicitude for her daughter's improvement. She questioned so closely as to my antecedents that I found it difficult to answer her and conceal my identity, but I managed to gain her confidence, and she seemed satisfied with my first effort to instruct her idolized child.

Miss Bernice, or Bernie, as her parents called her, and by which name I was also permitted to address her, appeared a shy little thing at first, but I soon discovered was up to all sorts of mischief. Luckily she took a decided fancy to her new music teacher.

"I didn't know a boy could make me learn so fast," said she; "Papa and mamma are delighted; they think of asking you to go to Europe with us. You know we sail next



month for mamma's health. Would you like to go?"

"Indeed, I would," was my eager reply.

"Papa says since you saved our lives, you belong to us, especially as your papa is dead."

In the course of a few days, I received a cordial invitation from Judge Bennett to accompany himself and family on their European tour. I then unfolded to him my desire to further continue my studies in music abroad, which met with his entire approval.

"I had thought," said he, "of offering you a position in my office to study law, but if you prefer music, it will at least do you no harm. You are young and there would still be time for you to engage in the study of law, when we return. We propose to be gone a year. I intend to provide for you as I would for a son. You shall have every advantage you desire, for I am satisfied you are worthy."

When he pronounced the last clause of his sentence, I began to despise myself. Anything but worthy, was my internal comment. I was tempted, for the moment, to confess my false attitude, and take whatever consequences



might come but, alas, while I hesitated, I lost my opportunity. The Judge was called away, and my courage failed when I again gave the matter serious consideration.

Bearing in mind that I had promised to deliver the book ordered by Madam Laureola, I set out, during a leisure hour, to fulfill my engagement. Ascending the steps to the Conservatory of Music, the door opened and out stepped Judge Bennett. Our surprise was mutual. I thought he exhibited signs of embarrassment, when he said in a tone of inquiry, "I didn't think of seeing you here."

"I came to deliver a book, I promised to Madam Laureola," I promptly explained.

"Oh," said he, evidently relieved, "that's right; keep your promises. I also had business here, professionally, of course, that must be attended to before we leave."

My suspicions were aroused. I wondered whether the Judge had business with the conservatory people, or with the madam. I made inquiries, but the madam was on her guard. She greeted me with exceeding cordiality, and did not seem in the least surprised when I told



her of my expected departure. When I asked her if she knew Judge Bennett, she replied, "I know him by sight," and immediately changed the subject.

On account of an imperative engagement which she had, my call was brief. She said in parting, "Fire hath consumed a house, and death hath laid one low, in accomplishing your destiny."

I thought of the fire at Green Hills, of the dead coachman, and wondered what next.

When she paid me for the book, she said, "May this money increase in the hand that holds it, a thousand fold."

I gave it to a blind beggar, led by a little girl, at the door; the puckering smile on Madam's face, which I spied at the window, signified her approval of my act.



## CHAPTER XXII.

Out on the broad Atlantic, the ship's prow eastward set, we sailed. Our party numbered five. Judge and Mrs. Bennett, Bernie, the nurse, and myself.

Kathrina, the nurse, was a young German woman, who sought her fortune in New York several years before, and on first landing had found employment as Bernie's nurse. But now, Bernie's mother's condition was such as to require a large share of her services, which she gave with unselfish devotion. Her parents were the tenants of a German baron, and Judge Bennett had promised to see that she was safely landed at her old home.

Our plan was for a short stay in England, and thence to Germany, where the invalid was to experiment with the waters of the hot springs of Baden-Baden, and I was to pursue my studies in music.

In the course of a few weeks, these plans



had all been carried out, but the condition of the invalid continued serious. At first she gained in strength and spirits, but as time wore on, it became evident she was really no better. She was determined to live, and would declare herself quite well every morning, no matter what had been the agonies of the night. She would not look in the mirror because, she said, it lied to her; she knew the thin pale face reflected there, was not hers. She insisted her faith would not permit her to suffer pain. Sometimes it seemed as if her mind were really controlling and curing her disease. Possibly her life may have been prolonged by the psychic treatment she gave herself. She made a brave struggle to conquer disease and death.

Hers was a most lovely character, but one it was not possible for her husband to understand. Theirs was an attempted wedlock between transcendentalism and utilitarianism.

"Here comes the Judge; make him welcome, Frank," the good woman would say, when I chanced to be with her, and she heard



her husband's approaching footsteps, "I am too weak to talk to him; he tires me."

It was evident the society of the sick wife was also often irksome to her husband, for she rarely spoke that she did not make an allusion to a doctrine vague and unsatisfactory to a man of his views. What time he spent in her presence was, therefore, whiled away, so far as possible, in listening to Bernie's music or her prattle, which was agreeable alike to both parties, and in an occasional game of chess which he was pleased to teach me to play.

Bernie, on one occasion, grew restive under the silence our game imposed upon her, and insisted on being taught the game, so she could play with her papa when "Brother Frank," as she now called me, was practicing his music.

"Girls don't make good chess players," said her papa; "now Frank will make a professional if he keeps on as he has begun."

"I believe I can learn every lesson a boy can," said Bernie, shaking her wise little head, with decided emphasis, "Frank shall teach me



to play chess, and I will win my first game with you, papa; see if I don't!"

"That's the way to put a girl on her mettle," said the Judge pleasantly, "intimate to her that a boy is in any respect her superior, and she will compass sea and land, to prove the inuendo false."

Pleasure grounds, gardens, and promenades, where crowds of people from various parts of the world might be seen, possessed a never-failing charm for Bernie. But the days whitest for me were those in which I visited a castle, or jaunted amid the beautiful scenery of the valley of the black forest. My antiquarian proclivities led me, more than once, to visit the parish church, which, it will be remembered, dates from the fifteenth century, and contains the tombs of several of the margraves.

Mrs. Bennett never wearied of the descriptions I gave her of the places I visited, and always said, "I shall soon be strong enough to go and see for myself."

Whenever I was alone with her, which was seldom, I felt impelled to give her my confi-



dence, for the thought that I was masquerading as a boy, in the presence of a dying woman, made me very uncomfortable. But fear of the consequences had kept me silent, until on one occasion she said, "Do you never write to your mother, Frank?"

"You know, I told you, Mrs. Bennett, I left home clandestinely, and I do not care to write."

"I can not believe you will continue to hold your resentment," said the good woman, "but boys are so different from girls. They will leave home and travel about the country, when girls would not dare to."

"They might dare if they could wear boys' clothes," I replied, significantly.

"What do you mean?" said she, with a startled look.

"I'll tell you what I mean, Mrs. Bennett, and trust to your honor to keep my secret. Considering the relation in which I stand to your family, and the many favors I have received from you, I think a full confession, as to who I really am, is due you," and I forthwith freed my mind of its burden, begin-



ning with my change of garments in New York.

In conclusion I said, "If you think me unworthy of the kindness you have bestowed, and would prefer to drop me altogether from your family, I shall not complain."

"Oh, you poor wayward child," she replied, "you little know my heart. I will do by you as I would have another do by Bernie were she situated as you are."

I burst into a violent fit of weeping, the first tears I had shed since I left home. Mrs. Bennett reached out to me as I sat close by the couch on which she was reclining, and drew my head down upon the pillow, beside hers, and kissed me.

The Judge at that moment appeared in the doorway, accompanied by Bernie. The tableau presented to the intruders was evidently a great surprise! The Judge transfixed with astonishment stood looking from one to the other, as if to assure himself there was no mistake.

I drew myself up in embarrassment, my face suffused with blushes.



Mrs. Bennett addressed Bernie. "It is time for your lesson, my dear." she said, "and Frank is waiting for you."

Her hint was not lost upon me. I promptly arose and went out with Bernie.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

Several days after I had another private interview with Mrs. Bennett. She immediately urged me to write to mamma.

"I know your mamma is consumed with anxiety," she said, "and it is cruel to permit her to suffer. Promise me, dear Frank, you will write to-day."

"What shall I tell her?" I said, in a relenting tone.

"Tell her you are safe with friends, well, improving in your music, and that you expect to return to her in the near future. When we reach New York, you must attire yourself properly, and go to those who love you, even if you should afterward return to us."

"You did not tell the Judge, I hope, for I should feel awkward to have him see me, if he knew," I said interrogatively.

"No, no; of course I did not tell the Judge," she replied; "he is a peculiar man. I never



could quite understand him, but I know he is very jealous of my exhibiting affection for anyone beside himself. I imagine he is even a little jealous of my love for Bernie. He can not help it; it is his nature. I tell you this to put you on your guard, for he is devoted to your interests. I told him you had broken down, the other day, in talking to me of your mother, and I kissed you to comfort you."

"He is never to know, then, that he has been imposed on by a girl?"

"No, not until we get back to New York, at least. No man should be tempted beyond what he is able to bear. Your dress is your protection. You carry it so well, none would suspect you. I shall guard your secret."

She returned again to the subject of my correspondence with mamma, and I promised to write without delay.

This fulfilled, my letter was written that afternoon.

Judge Bennett returned the same evening, in good spirits, from a trip to the home of Kathrina. He found her enjoying her visit but very willing to return to New York with



us, and she had promised soon to resume her duties as waiting maid to her beloved mistress, from whom she had been separated since our arrival in her native land.

"When she comes," he said, turning to his wife, "I shall feel greatly relieved, for Kathrina is an exceptionally good nurse. She never loses sight of her charge."

I fancied the qualification which the Judge named, particularly commended the nurse to him, as he seemed uneasy when his wife was left alone with anyone beside himself or the nurse.

I had noticed, before his wife confided in me, how constantly he hovered near, when Bernie or myself, or any of her small circle of admiring friends were in the room, and what a relief it seemed to be to him when she was alone with her nurse; but I attributed his conduct to his solicitude for her health, as it was evident conversation fatigued her. I thought it prudent to avoid being alone with her after I had recognized these conditions, although I longed to be with her, more than ever before.



The Judge actually seemed to plan recreation for Bernie and myself, which would engage our attention, to the exclusion of visits to his wife's room, until the day that Kathrina appeared on the scene.

I knew when I saw her, I should never have another opportunity of private conversation with Mrs. Bennett, while we remained abroad, but I little thought how soon she would be removed from our sight. One short month and it all was over.

It was Sunday. The day was one of the brightest. Mrs. Bennett had risen early, declaring herself quite well, but because she was not strong enough to attend church, she requested that a prayer service be held in her room, for the benefit of herself and family.

I was not anxious to avail myself of the opportunity to be present at religious worship, for having ceased to pray and attend church, I had lost relish for the things which once gave me great satisfaction. Indeed if the Judge had not intimated that, when the rector should join him, my presence was desired, I would have remained away. I was there in advance



of the rest, and while Kathrina performed some necessary offices, her mistress said:

"I thought I would have prayers, at least once while we are here, for even formal prayer is a help to the soul. But I hope to-day we shall all pray from our hearts."

"Do you think," said I, "the Lord will hear our prayers, if we don't do what he tells us to?"

"Yes. He has told us to pray, and if we pray, we have done one thing he has told us to do. Because we have failed, in some respects, to keep his commandments is the very reason why we should pray."

"I have not prayed for a long time," I said, "because I could not forgive my enemies."

"You are very wrong, Frank; you should pray for a forgiving heart, and you will have it. You will be able to forgive as you would be forgiven. God loves you, and love begets love. The deeper God's love for you sinks into your heart, the more you will love him, and in loving him, you will learn to love your neighbor as yourself, even though he may have wronged you. Open your heart to God's love."



She paused suddenly and dropped her head against the back of her reclining chair.

Judge Bennett and Bernie were coming in and heard her last words, and saw her fall back.

The Judge caught her in his arms and laid her upon the couch.

"She is dying," cried Kathrina.

She sprang up with sudden vigor. "No, no," said she, "I am not dying. I shall not die. See me walk." And she arose and walked across the room, and back to her couch, upon which she fell, nevermore to rise by her own will. Her will could not conquer death!

Restoratives were applied with the vain hope of resuscitating the form from which the spirit had fled, and had it been possible for that spirit to again take possession of its tenement of clay, the wailing from Bernie, "O, mamma, mamma, mamma," would have brought her back.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

The individuality of the Judge was strikingly manifested in his bearing after the loss of his wife. He avoided speaking of her, and seemed to resent, as an impertinence, any expression of interest in her from her sorrowing friends. He even checked Bernie's exhibition of grief.

"Bernie," he said, "your mamma belonged to your papa, and I am not pleased with your crying so much."

Kathrina was forbidden to speak of her mistress to him. As I bore my loss silently, and wept bitter tears only in solitude, his attitude toward me was plainly one of approval.

Several times when preparations were being made for our homeward trip, he consulted with me, and I soon became aware that my presence was agreeable to him, and in a measure, necessary. He seemed to want me all to himself. Did he see me in conversation with



another, he would call me away, and make some excuse for keeping me with him.

I remembered that his wife had intimated that he was of a jealous nature, and very exacting of his friends. As his society was exceedingly agreeable to me, it was no hardship for me to give him much of my time. He often laid his hand familiarly on my shoulder when speaking to me, and his touch always thrilled me. The death of his wife had suddenly established an invisible link between us.

Kathrina, quick to observe, conceived the idea that I was taking the place which should, of right, belong to Bernie, in the affections of her father. I chanced to overhear her cautioning the child to "watch out for that boy" or he would get all her papa's love and money away from her.

But Bernie answered, "Papa and I love Frank because he saved our lives, and mamma loved him, too. She kissed him once; papa and I saw her; and the last words she said to him were 'Open your heart to God's love.' Oh, no, Frank is not going to steal papa's love



away from me. You can't make me believe that!"

"It looks like it, anyway," said Kathrina, with feminine persistence.

I now fully appreciated the advantage which masculine attire gave me, and the wisdom of the departed friend, who counseled me to wear it until our arrival in New York; though probably she never had thought that I would be deprived of her protection. Possibly I was not, for who shall say her spirit did not wing its way with us as we crossed the great ocean.

I dreaded the voyage to end. I dreaded to return to my home, which I knew I must do, on my arrival. Judge Bennett, who was in utter ignorance of all that concerned me, had, on one occasion, when we were on deck together, spoken of my studying law in his office, in a manner that left no doubt in my mind as to his plans for me. A strange contentment possessed me when in his presence, I would gladly have accepted any position that would have enabled me to remain near him, had I not already determined to return home. The Judge certainly would despise me if he knew



of my deception, and I planned to visit mamma, and never see him again.

I believed the separation would break my heart, but to be disgraced in his sight would be even worse. It would kill me! In the meantime, I drank deeply of the joy of being near him. He was always on deck, which he paced with the ease of an old sailor. Sometimes I would walk with him, willing, for the pleasure of his society, to appear to disadvantage, as I did beside his imposing figure.

But the morning we arrived at our destination he was not out at his usual time, and my solicitude led me to listen at his door and I heard him talking to himself. The only words which I could distinctly hear were "strange boy." I wondered if he meant me.

As the vessel sailed into harbor, Bernie and Kathrina were on deck eagerly viewing the scenes of their own loved country, their eyes filled with tears that Mrs. Bennett was not with them, when I joined them.

"I wonder why papa doesn't come out," said Bernie; "I will go for him."



Landing of the passengers had begun, when Bernie and the Judge appeared. We were true mourners who entering the carriage were driven to the lonely home, from which we had gone out so hopefully a year before.

Old servants were there to greet us, sobbing and weeping for their loss.

Poor Bernie gave way to a flood of tears and Kathrina wept with her. I sought the room I had occupied before we left, and there vented my overcharged feelings.

In less than a week the matters of the household had been adjusted to the new situation, and the body of the mother so loved by all was resting in Greenwood cemetery.

Now was the time for me to carry out my plans. Judge Bennett seemed surprised when I told him I would like to visit mamma before I commenced in his office, and he reluctantly gave his consent.

"I hope you will not stay long, Frank," he said, "for I shall miss you. I need not tell you how necessary you have become to me. If you were a woman, I would make you my wife."



I recoiled from the man who could deliberately speak of his marriage with another so soon after the death of his wife. He met my look of indignation with perfect composure. He did not understand what it meant. His calm, gray eyes were fixed on mine in solemn earnestness, and suddenly I remembered he had spoken the words I resented, to a boy whom he loved, without a thought of marriage in his mind.

My face flushed with painful embarrassment.

He stepped forward and laid his hand upon my shoulder. "Frank," said he, "this is the first time you ever misunderstood me."

"I understand you now," I said, and offered him my hand, for I thought it was our farewell interview.



## CHAPTER XXV.

Hastily crowding a few of my belongings into a small satchel, and, without bidding adieu to any of the other members of the family, I went directly to Madam Laureola's.

To her I recounted all that had occurred since I parted from her, and asked her protection and assistance in making a change in my attire, and in leaving the city for my home. She did not seem surprised, but questioned me closely, after I had finished my narration.

"You may depend on my help," she said, "but would it not be better for you to continue in your present clothes, and study law in Judge Bennett's office, than to go home and waddle around in long dresses, and get girl's prices for your music lessons? In one case you will be pretty sure of rising in the world; in the other you must be hampered by woman's disabilities."



"I can study law if I choose in skirts," I replied. "Other women have done it."

"Yes, others have done it, but they have had to row against the tide, and their crafts have been buffeted by the waves of public opinion, and as you are well started out in the masculine boat, why not stay where you may easily sail into harbor with colors flying?"

"I wish I might," I said, "for I shall forever, after this, abominate the tiresome swing of a skirt. I have grown strong and vigorous in this dress, and I like it; if I were to set the fashion for woman I would give her a short skirt that would not burden her."

"I must do my duty to mamma," I said, returning to the subject from which we had digressed; "it is not a question of choice with me. I promised I would return in a year and she will expect me. I would like to get off this afternoon, if my costume can be arranged."

"As to that," said the madam, "I will lend you any one of my disguises you may select; you can go then and choose for yourself."



I chose a plain black dress, and in this, with my face veiled, I went out on my shopping tour.

I selected a dove-colored traveling costume, with hat and gloves to match. These with the other accessories of woman's wardrobe were sent to Madam Laureola's address, and arrived in time for me to array myself in them before leaving for the train.

So long unaccustomed to the restraint and burden of female attire I felt awkward at first and the madam remarked, with an additional pucker to her puckery mouth, that I appeared like a man in disguise.

She said in parting with me at the door, "I shall not lose sight of you, for I am interested in your destiny."

The carriage was waiting for me, and I hastily descended the stone steps, at the bottom of which I came face to face with Judge Bennett.

He turned to look after me as I quickly passed him.

"Frank," he called, in a husky voice.

I made no answer, but hastened forward to



the carriage. I felt a hand on my shoulder. His eyes blazed fire into my face.

"Frank," he said again.

His breath came in quick gasps. I was frightened. The coachman had deposited my satchel in the carriage and stood by the open door, waiting for me.

"I must go," I said in a trembling voice and I sprang into the carriage. Judge Bennett instantly followed me.

"Frank," said he, "I shall not lose sight of you until I know the meaning of this."

"Drive to the depot," I said, to the waiting coachman.

"Why are you stealing away from your friends in woman's costume?" was my companion's first question, when we were alone. "I thought you had gone to your mother."

His last remark reassured me.

"Judge," said I, "I am just what your wife called me when I confessed to her, a poor wayward girl. I appeal to your honor not to make this interview so long that I shall miss the train which I have arranged to take for my home."



The Judge sat staring at me. He said not a word. His eyes did not lose their fire. They seemed to kindle and re-kindle under his intellectual brow. He sat in silence—not a word had he uttered—when the carriage drew up at the station.

I was confused and my heart sank as he assisted me to alight, but the pressure of his hand made mine tingle to the finger tips, and I soon recovered myself, and walked silently by his side.

We had barely time to catch the train, and as he put me aboard, he said, so only I could hear, "I shall not lose you, Frank; *I love you!*"

I watched him walk away from the car window, and had I found the strength, I believe I would have called him back, for I suddenly felt I could not part with him. I could neither speak nor move. I leaned my head against the back of the seat, closed my eyes and was in a semi-conscious state until roused by the conductor.

I handed him my ticket mechanically. As he returned it, he looked at me inquiringly.



"Are you ill?" said he; "Shall I open the window?"

I shook my head and he passed on. I caught a glimpse of my face in the mirror at the end of the car. It was deathly pale.

By degrees I recovered myself sufficiently to gain control of my thoughts. I called in the rioters and tried to give them sober places, but there was one which, in spite of my efforts, dominated all the rest. It echoed and re-echoed through my brain.

The words, "I love you," rang in my ears and the passion expressed in those eyes of gray had burned into my heart. Struggle as I might, I could not banish the picture of the Judge, nor forget his low-murmured parting declaration.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

Gabriel Booth was pacing the veranda with hands crossed behind him, and head bent forward, as though in deep meditation, and he did not observe me until the sound of my feet on the steps attracted his attention.

Peace came to my troubled soul. I felt in a restful atmosphere. As he bent over me, the morning sun glinting his golden hair, and a smile of genuine pleasure illuminating his saintly features, he said, "The dove has returned to the ark."

"Yes, like Noah's dove, she found no rest for the sole of her foot, and so flies back to the ark," and I stepped lightly into the hall.

Mamma waiting there clasped me in her arms.

"Ó, Frank," she said, "I am *so* glad you are here at last!"

I dashed away the tears that would come. "Where's Marie?" said I.



"Marie has met with an accident," mamma replied, in a subdued tone. "You must be prepared to see a great change in her. She dreamed last night you were coming to-day."

A weak voice which I recognized as Marie's, reached me from mamma's room. "Has Frank come," it said.

"Yes, I am here, Marie, and I'm coming to you at once," I called out.

I was shocked beyond measure when I saw the dear child. She lay upon the cushions in my father's invalid chair as helpless, almost, as an infant.

"You didn't know I was hurt, did you, Frank?" said she, with a bright smile, of which it seemed nothing could rob her.

"No, I surely did not know of this," I answered, tenderly embracing her; "how were you hurt?"

"I fell from the carriage the day Aunt Susan was buried, and injured my spine. Mamma said she would write you about it, but she wasn't sure you would get the letter."

"You were so far away, you know," mamma interposed, with a meaning gesture.



I thought it unwise to pursue the subject, for it was evident mamma had covered my escapade with such harmless representations as suited her purpose. I was surprised when Marie alluded to Aunt Susan's death, but restrained my impatience for details until I could see mamma alone. This occurred when poor Marie found relief in sleep from the pain which she suffered most of the time.

"Aunt Susan's death was very unexpected," said mamma. "The summons came the day she made her will, which, you know, she talked about so much and neglected so long. It probably would not have been made at all, had not Mr. Booth dwelt in his sermon, the Sunday before, on the uncertainty of life and the necessity of living in a state of preparation for the change.

"She told me when we came from church, she would make her will the next day, and she did as she said she would. She divided her property equally between you, Marie, and myself, with the exception of her jewels, which she gave you.

"The will was witnessed at five o'clock in



the afternoon, and she was in her usual health, but at night I went to her room and sat on the side of her bed, where she was lying, and was leaning over whispering to her about you, when she said, 'Yes, dear,' and gasped and was gone. The doctor said it was heart disease."

I believed the property Aunt Susan had left should have gone to Mr. Booth, but I said nothing. We exchanged confidences concerning much that had occurred during our separation, and arranged between us how best to satisfy our friends who would be likely to inquire about my trip abroad. Mamma had boldly proclaimed this after receiving my first letter; this being evidence to her that I had escaped at the time of the fire.

My letter from Baden-Baden also played an important part in the role she was enacting for my benefit. Even Mr. Booth did not suspect our correspondence had been so limited, and imaginary letters had been read to Marie.

Any allusion to the reasons for my going to Green Hills was tabooed, as I still felt resentful, and I could not, as yet, forgive Nathan.

When Marie awoke she asked for me, and



made William quite jealous by saying she would not need him so much now Sister Frank had come. He had been devoted to her since her fall, and she proudly confided to me; "he has indulged in but two fights since I was hurt and he beat in both. He never swears only when he forgets."

It was evident the boy was much improved. He was strong, and could carry or wheel Marie about the house wherever she desired to go. He attended school, but all his spare time was cheerfully given to his young patroness. Indeed, he seemed to consider it an honor to wait upon her. He also assisted her with her flower garden, a fine variety of plants which he had potted and arranged in a circle in the bay-window. In the center of this circle was her reclining chair on which she lay, a flower among flowers, making a lovely yet pathetic picture.

William was also her messenger, carrying the fair blossoms to the poor and afflicted where they would give comfort.

She eagerly pointed out to me a cluster of unfolding rose-buds, saying, "They will be in



bloom to-morrow and I'm saving them for little Lily Brown, who has been ill weeks and weeks. The last I sent her a man offered William fifty cents for, and boy-like, he accepted the offer and took the money to Lily. She cried and said she would rather have the flowers.

"These were the flowers that William had one of his fights about. A boy met him and called him a 'girl-boy;' he wouldn't stand that. He told me he just laid the bouquet down and wiped the ground with the rowdy, although the rowdy was the biggest."

"It's a pity William will fight," I said, to draw Marie out, for it seemed to me she rather enjoyed his pugilistic feats.

"Yes, it's a pity, but he will do it," she replied in a tone of mild resignation. "Mr. Booth thinks he will outgrow it," she added, with a sigh, "and Mr. Booth knows."

Hero-worship is strong in womankind. Marie had a touch of it, but she was unable to make a distinction between physical and moral courage.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

I naturally resumed duties which had occupied my attention before I left home, but they seemed tame to me now. It is true my music was an unfailing source of comfort and more pupils applied than I could accept. I was also offered a position to sing in the Episcopal church, which I declined on account of my overweening love for Gabriel Booth. His pulpit ministrations satisfied my soul. His daily life was a sermon. I could find no flaw in his character. I loved him devotedly; not as I loved Judge Bennett, in whose arms I ardently longed to be, but as one possessing more than human perfection, and whose good opinion I coveted above everything else. Judge Bennett was connected in my mind with the things of earth; Gabriel Booth with the things of heaven. Could both men have been made into one, to have been wedded to that



one would, at that time, have satisfied every desire of my soul.

Marriage, after all, was only a secondary consideration. I preferred a professional career and matrimony might interfere with this. What Madam Laureola had said to me about rowing against the tide only stimulated my desire to overcome difficulties. If I chose the law, lawyers would antagonize me; if I chose medicine, doctors would try to put me down; if I wanted to devote my life to ministrations in the pulpit, the holy ecclesiastics would say me nay; and all this because of my sex.

I wondered how Mr. Booth regarded the subject of woman's sphere, which Susan B. Anthony and others were discussing on the platform, and if he would approve of women studying for the ministry. He visited Marie's room every day, and here we often met and exchanged views.

I said to him on one of these occasions, "Do you approve of women preaching?"

"As ordained ministers, certainly not," he replied, "our Church would not ordain a woman."



"Why not, Mr. Booth?"

"It would be against all precedent. There was not a woman among the twelve apostles, and it is evident that if Jesus had intended women to preach, he would have said so."

"Then it would be no use for me to study for the ministry?"

He looked at me in pleased surprise as he said, "I am glad you have a desire to preach, for I have looked in vain for you in the Sunday school since your return, and there is your opportunity. You may train the young. Women are especially adapted to that kind of effort, and, Frank, you are a born teacher. You demonstrate that gift in teaching music. There is no one among our young people more competent to do church work than yourself."

"But, Mr. Booth, I can't make teaching in the Sunday school and doing other church work my life work, unless I am paid for it. I want to be independent."

He looked aghast. "I thought you had chosen music as your profession," he said.

"Oh, no," I replied, "not to the exclusion of other things. I have a passion for music, but



I want to know something else. I have thought of studying law, for even if I could be ordained, I am not good enough to study for the ministry."

"No, indeed," interposed Marie, who had been a silent listener to our conversation, "you couldn't preach if you don't say your prayers. Mr. Booth," she continued, turning to him, "you said Frank would say her prayers and she doesn't say them yet."

A blush, like a girl's, overspread Mr. Booth's face as he looked at me. I also felt the color mount to my cheeks, and Marie stared from one to the other.

"What's the matter?" said she.

Mr. Booth made an effort to sustain his gravity but his dancing eyes betrayed him, and he answered my deprecatory smile with one of cordial forgiveness.

His voice vibrated pleasantly as he said to me, "I know you are good enough to preach, but as you are denied the privilege, why not help some one else to preach?"

"There would be no money in it," I said playfully.



"How sordid you have grown," he continued, in the same vein. "But, seriously," he continued, "I never saw a young lady so anxious to make money as you say you are."

"That's the reason there are so few women who have made fortunes. They don't care to do it, and they have not been trained to make their own money. Now, I haven't an inordinate love for money, but I know money is power, and I want my share of it. I could do a thousand things that I desire to do, if I had it."

"Well, Frank," said Marie, "you are richer now than any of us; you have Aunt Susan's jewels."

"I do not intend to keep them, or her money either," I imprudently replied.

"Will you give them to Mr. Booth?" Marie asked quickly.

I was astounded and knew not what to say. There was an embarrassed silence and Mr. Booth arose to go. I followed him out.

"Mr. Booth," I said, when we were alone in the hall, "Marie has guessed right. I will tell you all about it when the opportunity occurs."



I do not consider Aunt Susan's jewels mine. They should be worn by your wife."

"Keep them, Frank," said he, "for I shall never marry unless I marry you."

With a sudden impulse, he seized my hand, and fervently pressed it to his lips.

I seemed, at the same moment, to feel a caressing touch on my shoulder, and I thought of Judge Bennett.

Mamma's entrance into the hall put an end to our interview.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"It is likely both of the applicants would be desirable additions to our family," said mamma, alluding to two persons who were waiting her answer to their request to admit them as boarders.

"Mr. Gale is an artist, has been studying abroad, and his antecedents are of the best. Miss Gay comes equally well recommended, but you know we can not be too careful where a woman is concerned, and I intend to make further inquiries concerning her."

"Why should you be more careful about the woman's character than about the man's, mamma?"

"Oh, you know, a breath of scandal would ruin her; but with a man it's different."

"Do you mean to say it might help him along?"

"No, not exactly that. But the world con-



does that in a man which it does not in a woman."

"Do you?"

"Why, yes, of course; everyone does."

"Well, I'm not going to," I said, with an indignant toss of my head. "I'm going to stand up for women. You may turn your searchlight on the young lady's character, and I will turn mine on the young man's; and if neither prove perfect, let's take them all the same, and turn them over to Mr. Booth to reform. There would be money in it, and there would be the satisfaction of having done a good deed. Money and a clear conscience is all anyone wants."

Mamma smiled. "I think we will take them without further investigation into their characters," she said.

They came. Miss Gay with her trunks, the size of which at least was sufficient to entitle her to highest consideration. One, William said, contained nothing but books and drawings, for it transpired she was an architect. Her quiet Quaker dress indicated that she belonged to that sect.



Mr. Gale brought but few belongings, and seemed very modest and unobtrusive.

Miss Gay, on the contrary, was breezy, and her cheery voice and lively manners were infectious. Mamma and myself became interested in her plans for buildings, the erection of which, she informed us, she usually superintended. She was a genius in her line, and originated plans which surprisingly combined beauty and utility. Especially did she understand the best arrangements for conveniences in housekeeping, and, at her suggestion, mamma made several improvements in our own dwelling.

Through Mr. Booth's influence, plans for our new church were submitted by her and accepted. I was particularly interested in these, and while she was drafting, I often dropped into her room. On her table lay a pile of sketches of different buildings which she had made. I came across one which reminded me of the peculiar arrangement of Judge Bennett's house, and I said, "Whose house is this?"

"That is Judge Bennett's house in New



York. He is a very peculiar man, and had strange ideas about the arrangement of a home. Some people thought he wanted to make a sort of prison for his wife, he was so jealous of her. She was an invalid and he gave instructions to her nurse never to lose sight of her. It is a rambling affair and so arranged that deeds of darkness might be committed with impunity. It was reported he kept some one confined there. The servants say there are certain rooms in the wings he always keeps locked. But still, Judge Bennett is a man highly respected and of immense wealth. He believes in giving women a chance, so employed me to draft the plans."

"Did you ever hear he was unkind to his wife?"

"Oh, no," she replied; "the truth is, Judge Bennett is different from others, and one who is not understood is often suspected of wrong. He had a handsome boy, Frank, with him for awhile, whom Kathrina, his wife's maid, thought he cared more for than for his wife and child. That boy, after Mrs. Bennett died, bade them all good-bye and went off, no one



knows where. Frank taught Judge Bennett's daughter music, and she was very fond of him."

"How old was the boy?" I questioned.

"Why, he must have been nineteen or twenty, and the girl is in her fourteenth year; just the right age to imagine themselves in love, thee knows."

"Does any one think the boy might have been murdered by him?" I asked.

"Well, when people don't know what has happened, they are apt to suspect anything," was the reply.

"I scarcely think the Judge would murder the boy," she said, after a moment's thought, "but his eyes show that he could do desperate things. They are like coals of fire."

I was anxious to learn when she had last seen the Judge, and said, "How long since that strange house was built for—I think you said his name was—Judge Bennett?"

"Yes, thee has the name right; it was built a number of years ago. I have forgotten just how long. But I saw the Judge just before I left New York. It was the first time I had



seen him since his return from Europe where his wife died. He is my attorney."

I wondered if fate was winding its web around me, and through this woman Judge Bennett would learn my carefully concealed address.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

It was almost impossible to secure a private interview of any length in the common parlor at our house, and this was the only place in which it would have been thought proper for me to meet Mr. Booth, unless he were especially invited to mamma's private parlor.

I was anxious for the interview, for I thought it important that I should disabuse his mind of the idea that I would ever become his wife. I believed it would pain him, and I was distressed that a man so good and gentle should suffer on my account.

At length I took mamma partially into my confidence, and, through her, made an appointment with Mr. Booth. Mamma was only too glad to favor the interview, for nothing would have given her more satisfaction than a union between her daughter and her pastor. I did not have the heart to let her know that the



meeting she had planned would be the death blow to her hopes.

With a countenance of heavenly radiance, Mr. Booth entered the parlor where I was awaiting him.

"At last," he said, stretching out his arms as he advanced toward me.

It was painful to dampen his ardor, by a repellent motion of my hand, but having done so, I said at once, "You have misunderstood me, Mr. Booth. You said you would never marry unless you married me, and if that is the case, you will never marry."

I can not, to this day recall that interview without tears. Mr. Booth's nobleness of character was manifested in every word he uttered. I felt when it was ended that I had put away from me an angel, for the sake of what?

I told him something of the First Owner of the chair, and that he was the rightful heir to Aunt Susan's property. He said Aunt Susan had a right to will her property to whom she chose, and he would accept no share in it, even if all the First Owner had said were true. He



was deeply interested and made many inquiries. He never hinted that it was possible for me to have been laboring under a hallucination. The fact that his family coat of arms was an exact copy of the carving on the chair seemed to impress him as a mystery worthy of attention.

I did not tell him the First Owner had said that at Gabriel Booth's death, without issue, he would be released from the bondage of the chair. I told him, however, that he was the last descendant. It occurred to me when I said it that if Mr. Booth adhered to his decision never to marry, there was but one life between the First Owner's release from thralldom.

I also told Mr. Booth of my resentment toward Nathan, and the effect it had produced in regard to my devotions. He evidently listened with a distracted mind and finally said, "I am not in a condition to give you advice this evening, Frank; your heavenly Father knows all about it. Talk to Him and tell me more when I am better able to listen. I can not yet believe it possible that I am to go through life without you."



"Mr. Booth," I answered, "don't think about it. Let us be brother and sister, for I have no brother and you have no sister."

"I shall gladly accept your proposition," he said, "until the time, which I still hope will come, when your heart will respond to the affection with which mine burns."

I felt unworthy of the love which that noble man was lavishing upon me, but I was thankful that he loved me still, and I hoped he would never cease to bestow at least a brother's love upon me.

When he arose to go I wanted to detain him. I wanted to give him some expression of my feelings toward him that would not be misunderstood, but I dared not trust myself to say more.

Although the hour was late, I could not retire without my usual good-night interview with Marie. The dear little thing slept by snatches and spent hours in improvising songs which she crooned to while away the slow-going time,—time winged to the joyous and weighted to the sorrowing.

She was saying her prayers in whispers and



as I crept into her room she looked up and said, "Frank, I more than say my regular prayers now. I ask God for everything I want and it takes a long time. I keep saying things to Him almost every minute I am awake. I talk to Him about my beautiful flowers. They are the angels, you know, that God and I send to comfort the sick.

"All my songs are to Him now. You haven't heard my new ones. They are all about the glory that papa went away with. When I lie in papa's chair, it often seems to me as if I were on his lap, with his arms around me, just as he used to hold me. Oh, Frank, I have dreadful pains, but after the pain comes the *glory*; I mean, I seem to see it again."

"Have you pain now, Marie?"

"Not much, only a little stinging in my back."

"Shall I rub it for you?"

"I'm afraid you are too tired, Frank, playing the piano so much."

"No, Marie, I'm not tired; my arms are as strong as a man's, and will take away those stinging pains."



While I was rubbing her, with great solicitude in her tone the child said, "William says it's a blasted shame that driver was so careless as to let me get hurt, and when he gets a chance he is going to knock him down and pound the life nearly out of him, and mamma says she shall never forgive him, and that worries me, for you know we must forgive.

"Mr. Booth says we must, because it's in the Lord's prayer, you know. We never know how much God has forgiven us until we forgive others. If you know, Frank, how Mr. Booth and I long to have you say your prayers, you would begin this very night."

I kissed Marie and went to bed without saying my prayers!



## CHAPTER XXX.

Since the artist, Mr. Gale, had become domesticated in our household, the question of having Marie's portrait painted had frequently been discussed between mamma and myself; and had at length been decided.

Mr. Gale was pleased with the idea, for he had a profound admiration for Marie.

Marie was quite delighted with the proposition, for she said the picture would be nice to leave, if she should be taken away.

One morning when Marie had been making a wreath of small white roses, to be used at the funeral of a poor little girl which was to occur that day, and a few of the loose flowers and litter lay scattered about her, Mr. Gale stood looking at her admiringly.

"I want now to arrange you for the sitting, Marie," he said. And he went to her, lifted the crimson satin cushion against which she leaned, rested her head upon it, and let down



the back of her velvet covered chair, until it threw her into a reclining position. Then he dropped the wreath on the side of her head, and the effect was that of a child pleasantly reposing.

William came in just then, and appreciating the situation, he flung the pretty soft scarf he had brought for Marie's outing on the veranda, gracefully across the chair, which was just the drapery required to produce a perfect effect. Mr. Gale said kindly, "That completes the picture." Marie's face beamed with one of her most seraphic smiles.

No artist could paint a face like that and not feel the influence of its spiritual beauty. Mr. Gale's rather somber countenance lighted up during the time he was engaged upon it.

William was delighted, and perhaps for that reason Mr. Gale became especially interested in the boy who criticized his work, as it progressed, with great freedom. Mr. Gale playfully asked him if he did not think he could paint a better picture himself, and he boldly replied that he intended to try some day.

Mr. Gale became satisfied, from seeing spe-



cimens of William's handiwork, which he had kept concealed in his room, that he was a genius needing encouragement, and was delighted to give him instructions in art.

Marie experienced great delight in listening to William's boasts about his future as an artist.

"I will make such pictures," said he, "as you see at fairs that win prizes. I will make a picture of George Washington. He will be on a white horse with a tall white feather in his hat, and he will have a drawn sword in his hand, and he will look as if he could lick the whole world. The horse will have a mane and tail yards long, and it will paw and snort and chew its bits and hold its head high. Jerusalem! People will be scared when they look at it."

"And Marie," said he, waxing warmer, under his listener's admiring gaze, "I shall paint you. You will be laying your little bank on the desk before the judge to pay my fine, and Mr. Booth and all the rest will be looking at you, sort of surprised."

"And you, too," interrupted Marie, "you will be looking at me."



"Of course, I shall be looking at you whether I am in the picture or not."

"But you must be in the picture," insisted Marie, "because you looked splendid that morning; you looked like a regular fighter."

"Did I?" said William, delightedly. "You will have to learn to paint, too, Marie, and paint me, for I didn't see myself; so we will have to paint the picture together. I'll paint you and you paint me."

This was a new thought to Marie, and she nursed it until nothing less than the promise that she should receive lessons with William would satisfy her.

William was at first not a little jealous of Marie's new found friend, as he was of me on my return home, and it was not surprising, considering his devoted attachment to her and his dependence upon her for nearly all the sympathy and consolation he had ever received.

Mr. Gale was a long time in giving the finishing touches to Marie's portrait. It was still upon his easel when William had the misfortune to be arrested in another fight. This time



it was with the carriage driver to whose carelessness Marie's affliction was due. Mr. Booth chanced to pass that way and witnessed the last of the affray. He said William's rage was something dreadful in a boy, and that he severely punished his burly antagonist.

William's story, told in his own words, was as follows:

"He was standing by his carriage, with his whip in one hand, and his horses' reins in the other, and I was going 'long past him, and he said, 'What are you scowling at me for, boy?' Then I stood still and looked at him. I suppose I looked as if I wanted to fight him, for I did; and he raised his whip. 'Go 'long,' said he. I didn't stir a step. He give me a lick. I snatched his blacksnake from him in a jiffy, and I lit in. I was so mad I didn't care for nothing. I run between his fat old legs, and down he went into the gutter with his reins all tangled 'round his neck and arms. His horses began to rear, and he tried to unwind the reins, but I was on top of him, and he couldn't do a thing but swear and kick and threaten me. He saw plainly if he didn't mind himself,



his horses would run and drag him to kingdom come in no time. I was putting in my best licks when Mr. Booth came along and a policeman wasn't fur behind him, and the game was up."

The papers gave altogether a different version of the affair, the reporter having interviewed the coachman instead of William, who was represented in headlines as being "A Dangerously Vicious Boy."

William, after all, came home from his trial something of a hero, for the big coachman cut a sorry figure preferring charges of assault against a stripling like the prisoner, to whose straightforward story the judge listened with a slight twinkle in his dignified eye.

A new hat, in William's hand, was all the evidence he brought home with him, of having matched his weight of 125 against 250.

When he read the report in the paper, another fight seemed imminent, and that the editor's scalp would be the next trophy the "vicious boy" would hang at his belt, was a foregone conclusion.

But the gospel of peace, as preached by Mr.



Booth and Marie, had a salutary effect on the young pugilist, and he once more settled down quietly to the culture of flowers, which employment itself begets harmony in the soul. Marie even went so far, in a few days, as to propose he should take a bouquet of her flowers to the man he had handled so roughly, but William had not yet grown in grace sufficiently to be willing to offer the olive branch.

"No," said he, "I can't do that, even for you, Marie. If you don't want any more fighting done, let me keep away from him. He riles me."

The most quieting employment for William, and the one which seemed to suit him most perfectly, was his lessons in drawing. He proved an apt scholar in artistic creations, and Mr. Gale spared no pains in the instruction which he was pleased to give him. He was soon able to assist Marie in her efforts in the same line, while she, very delicately, corrected his grammar, and gave him all the help in her power.

Her pain grew less, but the injury to her spine was such as to helplessly confine her to



her chair. Her portrait, which Mr. Gale had painted, and which hung in the hall, was a vision of loveliness, but not more lovely than herself. The budding child gave promise of unfolding into surpassingly beautiful womanhood.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

Miss Gay had just finished reading a letter which she held in her hand as I passed her open door. She called after me.

"Here is something that may interest thee," she said; "thee may remember what I told thee about the peculiarities of my attorney, Judge Bennett.

"I remember it well," I replied.

"Well, I wrote him on business and incidentally mentioned some of your traits which I knew he would admire. Now, here is what he says about it;" and she read from the letter: "I trust your friend, Miss Frances Adams, whom you praise so highly will not disappoint you. I am glad you are so pleasantly situated, and that you enjoy the friendship of so estimable a young lady. Whatever concerns you or your friends, is of interest to me."

"Thee sees," said she, pausing and playfully shaking the letter at me, "thou hast become



an object of interest to Judge Bennett, and who knows what may come of it? He likes ambitious women. I know thee would just suit him."

"Why wouldn't you suit him?" I said.

"O, he'd never think of me. He must have a blue blood, and he knows thou art that, for I have told him. This is not the first time I have written about thee to him; just a word, thee knows; but this is the first time he has noticed any remarks."

"It's too bad to be throwing out such hints about a man whose wife has scarcely been dead a year," said I.

"O, but I must get my work in before any designing widow gets ahead of me. I have my superstitions, and one of them is that the architect who plans a house, is fated to influence the destiny of the lady who presides over it."

"Tell me all the things you have written the Judge about me," I said coaxingly.

"O, no; I can not consent to make any further disclosures. It is enough that I am convinced from this letter that I have played my cards well, so far, and I really don't believe



thee would refuse Judge Bennett, if he were to offer himself. I shall go to New York as soon as I can get the church building off my hands, and I want thee to visit me there."

"O, that is your plan?" I said; "I am afraid it will miscarry. I shall not go to the mountain, the mountain must come to me."

"So thee refuses to visit me in New York?"

"I refuse to be introduced by you, in New York, to Judge Bennett."

"Is it Mr. Booth, then?" questioned Miss Gay, raising her eyebrows archly.

My face grew hot with blushes. My companion saw I was annoyed and hastened to apologize.

"I beg thy pardon," she said, "if I have taken too great liberty with thee."

"Mr. Booth is very dear to me as my pastor, and it hurt me a little to have him spoken of in any other relation," I explained.

"O, well, if that is all, don't lay my thoughtless words up against me," she said. "I presume thee would as soon think of marrying the angel Gabriel as Mr. Booth, but I have read that, long ago, the sons of God saw the



daughters of men—that they were fair, and they took them wives of all they chose; and, in my opinion, that is about what one of the sons of God, in this house, is thinking of. But Mr. Booth would not fully satisfy thee. Educated in the old theology, he is necessarily a little narrow in his views.”

“O, don’t say that, Miss Gay; he is one of the broadest minded men I know.”

“In spots, Miss Frank; he is broad in spots. He would approve of women going to the ends of the earth to preach to the heathen, without ecclesiastical ordination, or even here, for that matter in the Sunday-school, but he would deny her ordination to preach in his own pulpit. She might speak there, but not as an ordained minister. Now, I call that abridging the rights of women, and I call it disobedience to the commands of God himself, and antagonistic to the doctrines which Jesus Christ promulgated. Mr. Booth preaches a doctrine he doesn’t understand in its fullness, or he would be glad to have every human being enjoy the same privileges which he enjoys. Love one’s neighbor as one’s self



covers more ground than thy good pastor has dreamed. It covers the woman question!"

Remembering that Mr. Booth had instanced Christ's example in choosing only men for his apostles as reason for the church refusing to ordain women, and anxious to exonerate him from the charge of narrowness or bigotry, I repeated to Miss Gay what he had said.

"O, yes," she replied, "I know all their reasons, but they are like the laws of England, of which it has been said that a coach and four might be driven through every one of them, in their interpretation. Because Christ drank wine drunkards say it is the thing to guzzle; and because Christ did not choose women for his apostles, theologians in this enlightened age, say women must not be ordained. I tell you, when the commands of God, and the doctrines preached by Jesus Christ, are understood and carried out, there is not a field of usefulness open to men that will not be open to women."

"I wish you would talk to Mr. Booth on the subject," I said, "I don't think he has considered it in the light in which you put it."



"Bless your innocent heart! My views would bore him. All he wants of me is to tell him how the church should be built. He doesn't want me to tell him, if thou art his wife, his sons will lean to music, and if I occupy that position, they will have proclivities for architecture, for he knows it as well as thee knows that thy daughters will inherit their father's traits. Things that he is conscious of being ignorant of, he will listen to, but he thinks he knows more about theology than I. Were I to say to him, if thou circumscribe woman's attainments thou wilt cheat thine own sex, for there can be no perfection in the race until we have a line of educated and untrammelled mothers, what would be his reply? 'Let the women keep silent in the churches.'

"He would thus, by quoting Scripture that he has misinterpreted, tie the tongue of oratory, and deprive her sons of the prenatal culture which the mother transmits to her offspring. Quakers, who have silenced song, have not committed so great a wrong. Our women may preach the same as men."

"You must talk to Mr. Booth," I insisted.



"Thee must talk to him thyself."

"Oh, he would swamp me with arguments in a moment, if I were to undertake to convert him to the views you have expressed. No, you must compass his conversion yourself or he must remain in the heathenish darkness by which he is enveloped," I said, playfully.

"Hast thou not a duty to perform?"

"Not to Gabriel Booth," I answered.

"Then, thou dost not love him?"

I was silent. Miss Gay began folding the letter from Judge Bennett, which she had held in her hand; pausing she offered it to me.

"Would thee like to see his handwriting?" she said.

I experienced a sensation such as a touch of the writer's hand had, more than once, given me, as I took the letter. Marie's theory about the subtle influence of the animate body upon inanimate objects was illustrated in my case.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

Strange wooing was Mr. Booth's! Each day he made me conscious of his abiding affection by an act or look which I could not but understand, yet never a word did he utter. So long as he was satisfied he had no rival, he had evidently schooled himself to watch and wait.

My heart reproached me for permitting these manifestations without protest, but what could I do? My tender attachment for him forbade me hurting his feelings. Many a sleepless hour did I pass in planning to break the illusion. Sometimes I would question my own sentiments toward him, and wonder if, after all, I would be satisfied to live without him. But when I compared the feelings with which I regarded him with those I experienced toward Judge Bennett, I knew which must be my husband if I ever married.

Moreover, religiously I had grown away from my pastor. I no longer attended prayer



meetings or Sundayschool. I had not said my prayers since I refused to pray for Nathan. That one act was the first step in my soul's downward course. Although my prayers had been said in hope of promoting my spiritual well-being, as people take bitters for their physical health, my conscience had been so educated that I violated it when I ceased to pray.

The exhortations of the First Owner of my antique chair, to pray for Nathan, were often remembered and every silent negative I indulged dropped like a stone in the way of my spiritual progress.

Marie was the only member of the household who took the liberty of urging me to prayer, and this she did in season and out.

Under the impression that, in due time, I would become amenable to the matrimonial influences which Mr. Booth was foreordained to exert over me, mamma controlled the expression of her anxiety, if she had any, on my account. She had made the mistake, so common with mothers, of making a companion and confidant of another than her own daughter,



and it was not easy to establish that entire intimacy between us which had existed between Aunt Susan and herself. She had left me to my own devices so long it was impossible for me, at once, fully to open my heart to her.

Had I known that she was concealing a secret from me which I had a right to know, and which the force of circumstances at length compelled her to divulge, I might have been still more reticent than I was. I discovered in a book which I had taken from her table to read, a letter addressed to her in the well-known handwriting of Judge Bennett. She came into the room just as I had opened the book to the leaf where it lay.

"Mamma," said I, in surprise, "I was not aware that you corresponded with Judge Bennett."

Mamma seldom lost her presence of mind, but on this occasion her wits forsook her.

"Yes," she stammered, "that letter is from him."

She stood before me evidently making an effort to recover herself. The color had risen to her cheeks and the excitement under which



she was laboring gave a very youthful touch to her fine personal appearance. It occurred to me that she appeared young enough to be, herself, the wife of the Judge.

"I wonder," I said, playfully, "if your epistolatory efforts have captivated the Judge."

I had tempted her for the moment, more than she was able to bear. I noticed a sudden change in her expression. It was one of relief.

"Frank," said she, "how would you like the Judge for a step-father?"

"I can tell better after I have tried him," I replied; "he has certainly proved a very generous friend, and I have no doubt would make a good step-father. When do you propose to give him that position in your family?"

"Well, if he should desire it, I might set an early day," said mamma, evasively.

I was growing cold, but I gave no sign, while mamma was intently regarding me.

"I see you don't intend to gratify my curiosity," I said, and I resumed my reading.

"Give me the letter," said mamma, "that is what I came for." She took it and went away.

I let the book, the pages of which had be-



come a blank to me, fall upon my lad, and sat shivering as with an ague.

How long I sat thus, frozen almost to stupefaction, I know not, but it must have been a long time. When I did recover sufficiently to fully realize the situation, I was beside myself with rage. I muttered fearful imprecations. Queen Elizabeth, in her wildest seasons of temper, could not have been more profane. Had the angel Gabriel appeared at that moment, I believe I would have freely anathematized him.

My passion obscured my reasoning faculties to such a degree that I did not consider I might have been misled by mamma's ambiguous statement. The question of how it had all come about was uppermost in my mind. Had his correspondence with Miss Gay, who doubtless praised mamma as well as myself, effected the change? I thought of Madame Laureola, and her wonderful powers, and wondered if her necromancy was responsible for the strange turn in my affairs. The longer I dwelt upon the mystery the more difficult it became



for me to solve. All I knew was that mamma, whose veracity I did not doubt, had intimated that Judge Bennett was to be my step-father.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

I still sat brooding over my bitter disappointment, when I heard footsteps approaching. In an instant I snatched up the book lying in my lap, and when the door opened, I appeared to the intruders to be absorbed in its pages.

"Reading yet?" said mamma, who was accompanied by Mr. Booth. "Why," turning to her companion, "I left her here hours ago pouring over that same book."

"Can you stop long enough," she said, addressing me, "to see some music Mr. Booth has for you? It is for the oratorio."

Mr. Booth came forward to where I sat, and mamma excused herself, as she had other matters in hand.

"Am I intruding?" asked Mr. Booth, noticing something unusual in my manner.

"No, indeed," I replied, rousing myself, and taking the sheet of music from him.



I glanced over it. "Let us go to the piano and practice it," I said.

"Oh, no; not now!" objected my companion. "When such an opportunity as this occurs, for a little privacy, I want to improve it. For a long time—ever since our interview—when you told me about my being the last of my race, according to the wraith's statement, I have been anxious to have further conversation with you on the subject. It is remarkable that the photograph of the coat of arms carved on the chair is my family ensign. There were other remarkable things which you told me at the time to which in my disturbed state of mind I gave little heed. I wish the chair had not been disposed of during your absence. I was sorry to see it go although, at the time, I knew so little of its history."

"Nathan was to blame for the outrage," I replied, "for it was nothing less. He came and offered mamma to take it back and pay her half the price I paid for it, and she let it go for she never liked it. But if I can find it, and it is purchasable, I will have it again. Nathan pretends he does not know to whom



he sold it, and he thinks it was taken out of the city, but I am on the watch, and if it ever comes back, I intend to hear the end of the story the First Owner began to tell me. If impressions amount to anything, I have not seen the last of that chair."

"Would you have any objection to my purchasing the chair, providing it can be found?" said Mr. Booth. "You know, it is the spirit of one of my ancestors who claims to be the First Owner, and as I am the last of his race, ought I not to be the last owner? I would lend it to you if I had it."

"I am ashamed to appear less generous than yourself," I replied, "but as I told you, the First Owner can only appear to the owner of the chair. Now if you were to own it, he would appear to you and not to me, and I could never hear the end of the story from him."

"But you could hear it from me," said Mr. Booth. "I would tell you all he said."

I could not but smile at Mr. Booth's cleverness. He was in one of his happiest moods, and had scarcely spoken before I felt his soothing influence. I always felt a sense of protec-



tion when he was near. As he sat there awaiting my reply, a more perfect specimen of manhood could scarcely be imagined. His lofty brow, smooth and white as alabaster, over which strayed locks of gold, was a fitting dome to the faultless structure beneath it. Every feature was strong and clear cut, and his neck rose from the shoulders with a dignified poise which accorded well with every motion of his straight graceful figure.

I never admired him more than I did at that moment, and never felt less like resisting his advances. I took a sudden resolve.

"Mr. Booth," I said, "I have never had a confidant, have never laid my heart bare to a human being. Whatever mamma knew, Aunt Susan knew. Papa was too sick, and Marie too young, to receive my confidences. My school friends I dared not trust, but I dare trust you, and to-day I know I ought to trust you fully, after all that has passed between us. I believe your feelings toward me are such as you have declared them. I know I love you, but, my dear pastor, it is not in the



way that a wife should love her husband. *I have loved another, I know the difference.*"

I had cast down my eyes and did not raise them as I paused. I feared I might see him looking grieved.

A short silence fell between us, which was broken by Mr. Booth saying, "Frank!"

I looked up. He was white and calm.

"This is not the time for me to say all that is in my mind," he said in a voice faint and unsteady, "but, my dear sister, I assure you I desire your happiness above all else, even though it be with another."

"Oh, I did not mean to say I should marry another," I replied; "no, no; I am bereft of hope. I shall be wedded to whatever profession I shall choose. I think mine will be papa's choice—the law. I hope I have inherited some of his gifts."

"I'm sure you have," replied Mr. Booth, "but why not choose the missionary field."

"What could the Church do with a missionary that does not say her prayers?"

"I suppose it would have to let her sing them," he answered, "as the birds do. Do



you know, Frank, there were tears in the eyes of many of the congregation when you were singing last Sunday—

Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
When the waters near me roll,  
When the tempest still is high."

As he slowly repeated the foregoing lines of his favorite among the "Songs of Zion," his voice seemed to gain strength and volume, and I knew he was resorting to the stronghold, while I was stubbornly battling the waves alone.

"Those words," he said, "always inspire me with courage. It has done me good to repeat them. They are to me what storm-cellars are to the dwellers in places where tornadoes prevail."

"I feel so wicked to-day," I replied; "I don't care what comes. I believe if I could have one of William's fights with somebody it would do me good. I don't want to sing my prayers, and I don't want to be a missionary. I want to do something desperate. I would like to go over the Falls of Niagara. Now,



you see, having once begun to confide in you, I am letting it all out. You shall be my father confessor, for it is said confession is good for the soul."

"I must give you advice, if I am to be your confessor," replied Mr. Booth, apparently unmoved by the disclosures I had made, "and my advice is that you take a nap."



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

Had my tender confessor advised fasting or flagellation instead of a nap, I might have starved myself to a skeleton or scourged my body until the blood flowed in streams, but it was impossible for me to do as he had counseled, much as I desired forgetfulness in sleep. The Lethean cup was not for me. His presence had, in a measure, quieted me, but on account of an imperative engagement with one of his flock, he was compelled to leave me to my own devices.

Passing Marie's door, which stood slightly ajar, I heard her in earnest conversation with William, and paused a moment. I saw her reclining with a little gilt-edged book open in her hand, while William sat near with his slate on his lap and his pencil poised between his fingers.

"You can hurt your soul," Marie was saying, "just as easy as you can hurt your body.



If you put the hand of your body in the fire, it will burn and be injured, and if you put the hand of your soul in the fire, it will burn and be injured."

"Oh, no, Marie, the soul has no hand and can not burn."

"Yes it has, William. The soul has a hand. Mr. Booth says so. He says the soul is in the body and looks just like it, and when we die it goes out of the body and can be seen in the spirit world; and he says whatever we do that is not nice and right, mars the soul that ought to look beautiful. I asked him if, when you fought and got your body all scratched up, your soul got scratched too, and he said it did. Think of that! You won't fight any more, will you?"

William looked thoughtful and made marks on his slate. "How does Mr. Booth know?" said he.

"Why, he's a God-man and knows things we don't. He says we never think a bad thought that does not mar our souls, and our thoughts affect other people's souls, too. If we want to do people good, we must send them good



thoughts. He says every thought we send out comes back to us, good or bad."

The lesson I had heard goaded me, and I passed on, thinking thoughts that were to return to me and burn my soul like fire.

Miss Gay's cheery face was the next to greet me. She was going out to post a letter.

"Dear me!" said she, "how out of sorts thee looks! Doesn't thee want to walk out with me for a change?"

"I was going to practice for the oratorio," I said, doubtfully.

"Oh, put that off and come with me. I have another letter from Judge Bennett, and I want to tell thee about it."

It is needless to say I accepted Miss Gay's invitation.

"The Judge is coming," said she, as we walked leisurely along the avenue. "He writes he is coming this way on business, growing out of a trial, and will stop over a day or two, for he wants to see me about my affairs. So thee sees, Frank, the mountain is coming to thee, as thee said it must."



"Not to me," I thought, "but to mamma," so I was silent.

"Why, what ails thee?" said my companion, peering under my hat. "I'm afraid thee is sick."

"Oh, no, impossible! I was never sick in my life. There is nothing the matter, only I'm tired out preparing for the oratorio. When did you say your Judge was coming?"

"He is not my Judge; he is thine. I insist upon it. The book of fate says thou art to marry Judge Bennett, and he is to be sent here for that very purpose. I feel it in my bones. He says he does not know the exact time when he will come, but he will write before he starts, and I will let thee know so thee can have thy wedding gown ready."

It suddenly occurred to me that mamma was not preparing her trousseau, and that she was yet in mourning for Aunt Susan.

We were passing a mail box and Miss Gay stopped to drop her letter without waiting a reply from me.

"Now," she said, as we resumed our walk, "that letter will excite the Judge's curiosity



about thee, and prepare the way for him to ask an introduction, and if nothing comes of it, I miss my guess."

"How old is the Judge?" I asked, carelessly.

"Just in the prime of life, my dear. Probably about thy mamma's age, thirty-five or forty."

"Why not introduce him to mamma? I need a good step-father."

Miss Gay laughed gaily.

"You should see the Judge to appreciate thy ridiculous suggestion," she said. "Why, he looks ten years younger than he is, and he is ten years younger than he is. He is passionately fond of music and that will attract him to thee. It was the musical genius of that boy he took to Europe with him that bewitched him quite as much as the heroic effort the boy made to stop the runaway horses. Frank, does thee really think thy mamma would marry again?"

"She might be tempted to if she had an offer from such a man as you say Judge Bennett is."

"No," said Miss Gay, "I do not agree with



you. I think nothing could induce her to marry. She has been too long mistress of her household to submit to a division of authority, and is too self-reliant to feel the need of a human leaningpost in the way of a husband. I admire her wonderful strength of character."

"I presume that is just what the Judge would admire in her."

"Not after he has seen thee and heard thee play. I hope he will happen along just in time for the oratorio, for I know thee will cover thyself with glory on that occasion."

"I dread it, because my friends expect so much of me," I replied. "I ought to be practicing now; I have wasted precious time to-day."

"Oh, well, thee can make it up to-morrow," said Miss Gay, carelessly. "Here we are at Mr. Gale's studio; shall we go in?"

I gave a reluctant consent.

Mr. Gale welcomed us most cordially. It was my first visit, and I was much surprised when I recognized in the portrait he was painting, the face of the young girl I had seen at Green Hills. She whose mind had been affected by the apparition seen in her chair—



which I conjectured was the same I had owned. For obvious reasons I was silent on the subject, and made my visit as short as possible.

The artist also showed us a specimen of William's last drawing, which was on a piece of birch bark, and evinced true artistic skill. He said the boy was a most promising pupil, and would unquestionably rank foremost among artists.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

The opera house was filled to overflowing. The occasion was a benefit given a young girl of remarkable musical talent, which she had not means to cultivate. The oratorio of Queen Esther was being rendered by an amateur musical coterie. I was chosen to represent the Jewish queen.

I appeared on the stage arrayed in oriental splendor. My long silken train, undulating in sheeny folds, was the only part of my dress not sparkling with real gems. All the jewels left me by Aunt Susan were shown in their splendor. Her rings, which were the same I had seen represented on the hands of the First Owner of my chair, encircled my fingers, with the one she always wore. The golden tiara which held my long borrowed locks in place, the rings in my ears, the bracelets on my arms, my anklets and my sandals, all shone



with the precious jewels of Aunt Susan's ancestors.

My gorgeous appearance, which doubtless did much toward assuring my success, was forgotten by me, in the effort to act well my part. As I appeared for the last time on the stage, and was putting forth my best endeavor to fulfill the expectations of my friends, among the thousands of upturned eyes I saw but two, and those were Judge Bennett's, piercing me as with arrows of fire. I was not aware of his arrival in the city, and my surprise was complete. For an instant my voice faltered, but pride came to my aid and I drew myself up and compelled the issue I desired, which was success.

Mamma was detained at home by a slight illness. As I was about taking the carriage, which William had waiting for me, when the performance was over, I felt a hand upon my shoulder. It was Judge Bennett's.

"Frank," he said, "may I see you home?"

"Why, Judge, of course," I replied, in a tone as cordial as I could assume; "how you have surprised me! Is mamma expecting you?"



He did not seem to notice my question as he assisted me into the carriage and took his seat opposite me. When the door was shut, he bent over and looked into my face.

"Are you really going to marry the preacher?" said he.

"What preacher?" I said, rather coldly, for it occurred to me he was presuming in advance on the fatherly authority he was expecting soon to exercise over me.

"The preacher your mamma wrote me you were in love with, when I asked for you."

"When you asked for me?" I exclaimed in unfeigned surprise.

"Certainly; did you not see my letters?"

I was silent, for I did not wish to compromise mamma.

"There is some mistake," I said at length, "but I have read no letters from you. Mamma will explain."

"May I ask if you are in love with any one?" was the next eager question put by the Judge.

Again I was silent.



"Say; say quickly!" said the Judge, his breath coming heavily.

I could not speak, but he understood my look and was at my side in an instant.

All too soon the carriage drew up at our gate and I parted with my lover for the night.

Miss Gay was awaiting me in the parlor, having been escorted home by Mr. Gale.

"Thy triumph was complete," she said, "thy singing was wonderful, and thy appearance was magnificent. I wish Judge Bennett could have seen thee. He has written that he will arrive on the night train, and will call tomorrow. Now, hie thee to thy couch and get thy beauty sleep ere he sees thee."

I was only too glad to be thus summarily dismissed, for my overwhelming happiness could not long have been concealed from the quick-witted young woman.

Mamma had fallen asleep when I went to bid her good-night, and Marie was sweetly crooning her songs on her couch near by, but she paused long enough to tell me I looked heavenly and that she was praying for me.

"Oh, joy, joy!" I repeated to myself over and



over again, as I stood before the mirror in the privacy of my own room, slowly divesting myself of my ornaments. The more I dwelt upon my happiness, the greater it became. All night long I reveled in sleepless bliss, and when morning came, I experienced no sense of weariness.

Mamma having recovered, came to my room before I was dressed, and expressed her surprise at seeing me look so bright.

"I thought you would be all worn out with the effort," said she, "and I would send you a cup of coffee."

"Oh, no," I said, "I never felt better in my life. Excitement agrees with me. I am steely, mamma."

"I am sorry Mr. Booth could not have been here to enjoy your success. He was so interested," said mamma, alluding to the fact that our pastor had been called away to attend a funeral in the country.

"Oh, an oratorio is nothing to him compared to the enjoyment he experiences in comforting mourners," I replied; "let him go his own



good way, and don't try to entangle him in my badness."

"Why, Frank, I thought you were deeply attached to Mr. Booth, and I know he hopes to make you his wife."

"Well, his wife I shall not be, mamma. I love him dearly, but not as I should love a husband."

"Frank, I am astonished; and I must make a confession to you. Judge Bennett wrote some time ago and asked for you, and I answered that you were attached to your pastor and would probably marry him, and I thought it best not to unsettle your mind by saying anything to you about the Judge's proposal. I even went so far as to give you a wrong impression concerning his letter, when you found it in a book, as you will remember. I am sorry, but if you prefer Judge Bennett, I have not a word to say against him."

"Judge Bennett is in the city. He was at the oratorio last night and drove home with me, and when he told me about his letter to you, I said there was some mistake and that you would explain. He will be here to-day."



I then told mamma of the relation which had been established between the Judge and myself. She commended my prudence in giving her an opportunity to set herself right with the Judge, which, knowing her diplomacy, I was sure would be easy for her to accomplish.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Later in the morning, William handed me a card bearing the name "Henry Turner," with the information that the person it represented was waiting in the parlor.

Having promptly repaired thither, I saw before me a man of rotund figure, and a face on which glowed the ruddy hue of robust health. His gray hair seemed rather out of place, but it added dignity to his otherwise rollicking appearance. In England, from which country it transpired he had immigrated, he belonged to the class which ignores the eighth letter of the alphabet. This peculiarity was more pronounced in his present state of embarrassment.

"Hi—Hi 'ave called," he stammered, "to hask the privilege hof hexamining one hof the rings you wore last night. Hit is the one with the flat setting—the signet ring."

I regarded the request with a touch of suspi-



cion. "The ring was my Aunt Susan's," I said; "have you seen it before?"

"Hi can't say I 'ave seen the identical ring, but Hi 'ave seen one like it."

"Would you object to telling me where?"

My visitor looked at me quizzically.

"Hit was on the finger hof the First Owner hof ha chair Hi bought some time hago. 'E always wears hit."

"Have you the chair, now?" I questioned.

"Yes, hindeed! Hi wouldn't part with hit for hit's weight hin gold. Hit's Hinglish, you know! Hit's 'undreds hof years hold."

"How could you see the First Owner, with the ring on his finger, if the chair is so old," I said.

My burly English visitor threw his head back and laughed heartily.

"Hexcuse my rudeness," said he; "but you wouldn't hunderstand hif Hi were to tell you. Hit would sound like a ghost story."

"Has the chair a coat-of-arms carved on the back, Mr. Turner?"

"Yes, Miss Hadams, hit 'as. Hand the ring Hi want to see 'as the same coat-hof-harms



hingraved hon hit. The first howner told me so."

"I will fetch it," I said, and I went for my treasure.

On close examination, the delicate tracery on the stone setting of the ring proved to be a copy of the same coat-of-arms, which was carved on the chair in question; and which also corresponded with the photograph taken from the escutcheon of one of Mr. Booth's ancestors. Strangely enough, Aunt Susan had worn the ring for years without making the discovery, and during the time it had been in my possession, it had not occurred to me to try to discover the meaning of what I supposed to be hieroglyphics engraved upon it. Mr. Turner informed me that he had recognized several of the jewels, which I wore at the oratorio, as being the same as those worn by the first owner of the chair, who, he declared, appeared in it every night, and held conversation with him.

"'E is all the companion Hi 'ave," said the jolly Englishman, "for Hi ham ha bachelor,



living halone, hand hit was lonesome Hi was before Hi bought the chair."

Mr. Turner's interest in me deepened when I informed him I had once owned the chair, and intimated that I was anxious to possess it again.

"Hi can not spare hit," he said, shaking his head; "Hi would die hof the grumps without hit. The hold lord and Hi are chums hand can not be parted 'til the white flame carries 'im hof for good."

"Has he told you the white flame will carry him off?" I asked.

"Nay, not quite that," said the Englishman; "but Hi suspect as much. 'E don't say much about 'is affairs, but 'e 'as given me the 'istory hof Hingland, hin bits, 'undreds of years back. 'E his han hinteresting 'istorian, hand for a great lord to condescend to such has me, shows 'ow things will be hin the next world. 'E hadvised me to go to the oratorio, for 'e said hit was done to 'elp some one, hand 'e 'as warned me not to sit hin my chair when Hi can do good by leaving hit. Cobwebs hand dust on the back of the breeches hare has bad as cob-



webs hand dust hon the prayer book, haccording to the old lord's teaching."

"Has he ever urged you to pray for anyone?" said I.

"You're right, 'e 'as! There his a man who 'as cheated me hin a trade, and the hold lord hadvises me to forgive him hand pray for 'im, but Hi'll see 'im in Tophet first, the lying scoundrel. Hit's a good doctrine to preach to the good, but the likes hof me can't swallow hit."

"Am I to be classed with persons like my visitor?" was the unwelcome thought that intruded itself, like a dark specter, into the white light of the entrancing happiness, which the expectation of soon seeing Judge Bennett, had filled me.

He was even then at the door, and William ushered him into the parlor, where he glared at the unfortunate Englishman, who soon after took his departure, having, at my request, left his address with me.

I had but a few moments alone with the Judge, to whom I briefly explained matters relating to mamma and Miss Gay, the appearance of both being imminent. Indeed, catching



the sound of approaching footsteps, I had scarcely seated myself at a proper distance from the Judge, when mamma appeared and greeted him very cordially.

I immediately slipped away, leaving them to settle the little misunderstanding about their correspondence, as best they might, and went to Miss Gay's room.

The young lady was in an expectant attitude, having witnessed our visitor's approach from her window.

"Judge Bennett is here and calleth for thee," I said, playfully, "but you need not introduce me to him, for I was in the parlor with a visitor when he came, and have already made his acquaintance."

"Thou art a sly puss," replied Miss Gay, "to circumvent me, but it is well that he has come and has seen thee. Is he not handsome?"

"He is rather good-looking," was my non-chalant reply.

"Oh, he is more than that; he is kingly."

I could have hugged Miss Gay.

"Shall we go down to the parlor?" I said.

"Let us give him a chance to make the



acquaintance of thy mamma," said Miss Gay, retaining her seat. "Sit a moment and let me look at thee with Judge Bennett's eyes. Short hair, no vanity there; short gown, no vanity there; rings in the ears, vain and heathenish——"

"Stop!" I cried; "you are looking at me with your own eyes and not with your attorney's. I venture the assertion, he admires long hair, long trains, and all the foolishness in which women indulge to please the sterner sex. Anything else would be mannish, and no true man can tolerate anything that apes mannishness in a woman."



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

Going down to the parlor with Miss Gay, I found mamma in confidential nearness to the Judge, with whom she was earnestly talking. They were opposite the door and as we entered the Judge immediately came forward to greet us.

After a few moments of general conversation, mamma arose, and, having extended an invitation to our visitor to dine with us, left the room. Later, Miss Gay, remembering an engagement at the church, the building of which she was superintending, excused herself, saying she would return in time to see the Judge before dinner.

In that day full of ecstasy fell but one bitter drop, the thought of the disappointment I was sure dear Mr. Booth would experience when he should know of my engagement. Fortunately, having received no intimation of the state of affairs, he met the Judge at dinner as



he would have met any other guest at mamma's table.

Even Marie was kept in ignorance of our visitor's intentions, when he was taken to her room to make her acquaintance. She afterward confided to me that she had hidden in the button-hole bouquet, which he had permitted her to fasten on his coat, the motto, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

"He is a pretty big sheep," said she, "but I reckon he needs a shepherd as much as if he were a lamb, for he has awful eyes."

"Do you like him, Marie?" I said.

"Why, of course I do. I like everybody. But, dear me, he looked at you so, Frank. I would think if you were afraid of anything, you would be afraid he would turn into a bear and eat you."

"It would be a most delightful death to die," I said, carelessly. But Marie treasured my remark in her imaginative mind until it assumed such proportions as to color her dreams, and during her first interview with Mr. Booth, after his return, I heard her say she had either dreamed, or I had told her,



that it would be delightful to die and have the gentleman from New York turn into a bear and gnaw my bones.

"The Gentleman from New York," was the appellation which William had bestowed upon the Judge, and in consequence, Marie had adopted it. William, from the first, had conceived a great admiration for the Judge.

"He's a man," he said to Marie, "a fellow wouldn't like to fight. Nobody could whip him. I doubt if a regiment could down him. I'd like to see it tried. I'd just like to see how long a chip would lay on his shoulder."

"Oh, William," said Marie, "don't speak of it. Why, he might kill somebody if he would do as you say."

"Of course, he might. And he would, too, if he were mad enough. He's the man for me! He won't stand any foolishness, I'll 'low."

"Do you admire him more than you do Mr. Booth, William?"

"Mr. Booth isn't in it!" was the reply; "but if he were, he is the only man I know that I think wouldn't be afraid to tackle the Gentleman from New York. Mr. Booth wouldn't be



afraid to tackle Satan himself, but he's too pious to show what he can do. Piety is a good thing. Piety swells the heart. I'll bet that Mr. Booth's heart will outmeasure the biggest heart that ever beat. I'll bet there isn't a man on the face of the earth that would do more for a poor boy than he has done for me. I'll never go back on Mr. Booth. The Gentleman from New York is fine, very fine, but I like Mr. Booth."

"That's right, William," said Marie, "Mr. Booth is my man."

Judge Bennett had invited mamma, Miss Gay and myself, to drive with him in the cool of the evening, but mamma declined and Miss Gay also, so it came about that we had the carriage to ourselves, a boon for which we were duly thankful.

It was moonlight and we were oblivious of the flight of time. Mamma had become alarmed but I gleefully informed her that I had been out many a night with the Judge later than that when I was a boy.

The Judge insisted on my setting an early day for our marriage, and I named the time



when I knew Mr. Booth would be absent from the city on his summer vacation. We spent hours in planning for the first month of our honeymoon, which we agreed should last so long as we lived. Neither of us cared to go abroad, and as our marriage was to occur at the season when the Judge usually resorted to the cool breezes of the mountains for hunting and fishing, I proposed that he should take his bride into the wilderness with him. He was, at first, inclined to object, fearing the fatigue and exposure would be detrimental to my health. But I drew such a charming picture of the delights of the rural venture, that he was finally won over, and even consented that we should, like Abraham and Sarah, dwell in a tent, in some sweet solitude which nature had doubtless provided for our especial benefit.

Being doubtful of mamma's approval of our wild plan, we decided to make a short trip to Saratoga Springs and from thence to the Adirondacks.

Bernie was being educated at a convent and had arranged to spend her vacation, which would occur at that time, with a friend, and



she was not to be informed of her papa's marriage until his "hunting trip" was over and he was ready to return to New York.

Judge Bennett, having a case in court, was obliged to return home the day following. As he was to leave on the midnight train, he lingered by my side until the last moment, and when he had pressed me to his heart and I heard only his retreating footsteps, I flew to my room and quickly locked my door. Exhausted nature yielded to the long strain and ere long I was reveling in blissful dreams.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

My joyful countenance might have told the history of my heart to all beholders. I could not conceal my happiness, much as I desired to do so for Mr. Booth's sake, who regarded me wonderingly, when we chanced to meet; for not a suspicion of the state of my feelings had, as yet, entered his mind. Three days had passed since Judge Bennett's departure, and not a member of the family, except mamma, knew that he had taken my heart with him.

There was to be no formal announcement of our engagement, and the wedding was to be quiet and unostentatious. Consideration for Mr. Booth's feelings was the motive which prompted me to avoid publicity and display. In this mamma sympathized with me, although it was hard for her to reconcile herself to what she called "a commonplace wedding."

Judge Bennett had praised my appearance when personating Queen Esther, and I knew he



admired beautiful women, for who does not? But I knew he *loved* plain me, and it was my ambition that he should at least admire the adornment of the "strange flower," to which he said he had been attracted and would fain pluck for its fragrance.

Judge Bennett was poetical, and also had great reputation as an orator; but with all his gifts he was an exceedingly modest man, and was never known to indulge in a boastful utterance.

In that respect he was like my beloved Mr. Booth, who actually grew dearer to me as I realized the nature of the separation that must soon come between us. I was unwilling that he should receive the information of my approaching nuptials from the lips of a stranger, or even from mamma, for I considered it a sacred duty, which should be performed by me alone. I was at my wits end how it could be done in the most delicate manner. I wrote him a letter, but this I destroyed and the Fates finally came to my aid. I met him in the hall, coming from Marie's room, and he stopped to



ask if he could depend upon my assistance again in a sacred concert.

"You were so successful in the oratorio," he said, "we all feel that with your assistance, the concert must be a success."

"Let us go to the private parlor and talk it over," I said.

He eagerly followed me to the place indicated, and when I had shut the door, I turned to him and said, "When do you propose to hold the concert?"

He named the first of the month in which he was to leave for his vacation, and the last of which I had set for my marriage.

"I have another engagement which will occupy me at that time, and I have wanted to tell you about it ever since I made it," I said.

"Indeed?" he replied, looking at me inquiringly.

My tongue seemed for the moment paralyzed. I could not speak. A hot flush mounted to my cheeks, and tears came to my eyes. I covered my face with my hands. "Mr. Booth," I said, with my features still concealed



"I am going to be married." I then rushed from the room without even looking at him.

I heard him go to his study, and pacing his floor, the sound of his footsteps gave me the only real pain which my happy heart experienced during all my preparations for the event which was to permanently separate us.

My confidence was next given to Marie, and then to Miss Gay. The former wept and prayed over me more than ever, and asked permission to speak to Mr. Booth about it, which was granted. Miss Gay clapped her plump little hands joyfully.

"Fitz-James knew every wily train  
A lady's fickle heart to gain.

And so does Judge Bennett," she said. "Verily, I feared Gabriel Booth was thy Malcolm, and what could even a king do against such a formidable rival."

"You must think very highly of Mr. Booth," I said.

"I do, indeed!" she replied. "His greatness grows upon me with association. A year ago my judgment of him was superficial, but now,



in my opinion, he is very near to the God he worships. I revere him for his great goodness and his great talents. But, my dear, thou art on Judge Bennett's plane, and not on Gabriel Booth's. Thou hast chosen well."

"When will you be through with superintending the church building," I said.

"I will return to New York before winter."

"I shall probably be there to welcome you," I said, "and a warm welcome you will receive. I appreciate an honest friend."

"Deceit lurks not in friendship," was the reply. "I shall be only too glad to renew our pleasant acquaintance, but thou wilt be beset by friends and society will claim thee."

"Society can not have me. I intend to study law in my husband's office."

"Hast thou said so to Judge Bennett?"

"No, indeed! I intend to have him think of it himself and invite me to do so."

Miss Gay smiled. There was something in her smile that made me uneasy.

"You are irritating," I said. "Why don't you say what you think?"

"I think thou art wise," she replied, "if



thou dost wait for thy husband to invite thee, but I wonder how long thee will wait."

"You will see it will not be very long," was my confident rejoinder.

"Success to thee!" said my friend. "I admire thy pluck."

Our conversation was here interrupted by mamma who called me away to accompany her on a shopping expedition in the interest of my trousseau.

The only dress of my outfit about which I did not care to take counsel, was the one to be worn in the wilderness. I had planned this to please the eye of the Judge who was of Scottish descent. It was of Rob Roy plaid of the finest quality of imported goods. The kilt skirt met my russet leggins at the knee, which were supposed to be a protection against reptiles of all sorts. These with the loose fitting blouse, the winding scarf, and the Scotch cap, were packed secretly away from prying eyes. More than once, in the privacy of my room, I donned my cap and plaid and stood before the mirror, reveling in the thought of the delight I would experience with the chosen



of my soul, in the green glades and mountain bowers that awaited our coming. Once I caught myself singing—

My cap was my bonnet, my cloak was my plaid,  
As daily I strode through the pine-covered glade.

I sang all the time when Mr. Booth was not in hearing, but we sang no more together.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

Opening the casket containing Aunt Susan's jewels, I discovered I had therein deposited the address of the Englishman who owned the antique chair. I was overjoyed to find it, as I was anxious to visit the present owner of the chair while it was possible. Moreover, I thought it right that Mr. Booth should make his acquaintance, if he so desired, in order that he might through him learn more of his ancestors.

I went directly to Mr. Booth with the address, and told him all I knew of the matter. He was much interested and proposed that we should together visit Mr. Turner.

"I expect to leave for my vacation in a few days," said he, "and as you may not be here when I return, I see no other way than to make this visit without delay."

This was the first time he had alluded, even indirectly, to my marriage, since my abrupt announcement.



"Mamma knows nothing of the matter," I said.

"I think she should be informed and invited to accompany us," said Mr. Booth, promptly.

"It is impossible!" I replied. "I would gladly go with you, but mamma must know nothing about it. She would have us both consigned to a lunatic asylum."

"Oh, not so bad as that!" said Mr. Booth, with a faint smile. "She surely ought to know where we are going?"

"No, not in my opinion," I replied, shaking my head.

Mr. Booth looked surprised.

"Perhaps you had better go by yourself," I said, "only I would like to know the night you are going so I may give you a letter of introduction to Mr. Turner."

Mr. Booth seemed relieved. "I will go to-night," he said.

My letter was duly written, and Mr. Booth started with it after dark, for Mr. Turner's, who lived in the suburbs.

About midnight I was in a carriage rolling along toward the same place. The house



consisted of two rooms, and when the door opened in answer to my knock, I saw Mr. Booth sitting in close proximity to the antique chair.

"Woll, woll, woll!" cried the Englishman, "Hi ham surprised! Walk hin, Miss Hadams."

"Has the First Owner appeared?" I asked.

"'E is hin the chair now," was the reply.

"Ask him if he will tell Gabriel Booth, through you, all he has told me," I said.

"Will you?" questioned the present owner, turning to the chair.

"'E says 'e will," said the Englishman; "'e says tell you to pray for Nathan. 'E's gone now hin the white flame; hit must be midnight."

"Yes," I said, "it is midnight, and the carriage is waiting for me, but I could not get off earlier, and I must go right home. If you would like to drive with me," I said to Mr. Booth, "you're welcome."

Mr. Booth entered the carriage, and as we were driven home, confessed that he had been profoundly impressed with what he had learned, through Turner, from the First



Owner. He said he had not questioned him concerning the statements he had made to me about his ancestors, for that was of minor importance compared to the secrets of the world from whence he came. "These questions," said he, "are of tremendous importance to one who stands, as I do, a teacher between the living and the dead.

"Although I doubt the source of the communications," he continued, "I am in full accord with the statement made, that the true philosophy of life is incorporated in the teachings of Jesus Christ."

Fearing he was about to make a personal application of these teachings, I took advantage of the pause to speak of the matter which especially interested me at that time. Mr. Booth expressed himself as reconciled to what he called the dispensations of Providence, and I begged him to accept the ring on which was engraved the coat-of-arms of his ancestors. He was reluctant to take it, but finally consented to wear it in remembrance of the occasion.

When we alighted from the carriage, he took



my hand and pressed it affectionately between his own. "It is the last time," he said, as we went into the house together.

Mr. Booth left that week for his vacation and I was not ashamed to shed tears, with Marie, at his departure.

"I'll tell you, Frank," said she, wiping the drops of grief from her eyes, "Mr. Booth doesn't want you to marry the Gentleman from New York, and if I were you I would give it up."

"How do you know he doesn't want me to marry?" said I.

"Because he commenced talking about something else when I told him, and then, my mind smelled it. There are some things people know without being told. I couldn't keep your secret from William and he thinks it's a grand thing, and says if it wasn't for leaving me, he would go to New York with you."

"How could he leave Mr. Gale, who is going to make an artist of him?"

"Oh, he would leave everything now if it wasn't for me; but he knows he will have to go away when a man to seek his fortune. He



has been reading a book about it and is going to Italy to be a great artist. When he gets to be somebody great, and I grow up to be a woman, he is going to marry me, and have all the doctors in the world cure me. Do you think, Frank, all the doctors in the world can cure me?"

"I shouldn't wonder," I replied, "if our good old doctor himself should cure you. You are stronger than you were, I'm sure——"

"And," said Marie, reverently finishing my sentence, "nothing is impossible with God. William says he will invite Mr. Booth to live with us. He will be dreadfully disappointed if I do not get well and marry him; he says it would break him all up."

"You are both too young to talk about such things," I said, "and I wonder mamma permits it."

"She doesn't," said Marie. "She told me never to mention such nonsense to her again, or she would send William away. She called him a chore boy, too," and the child lowered her voice, "but I didn't tell William that. I just told him mamma said our talk was foolish-



ness and we must stop it, and he said 'all right.' He has promised mamma himself to say no more about it until he is a man and has made his fortune. But can we help thinking about it sometimes, Frank?"

"Yes, indeed, you can," I replied. "You must think of your flowers and your drawing and your studies, and everything that should interest children, and leave housekeeping affairs to grown-up folks."

"We never thought of it at all until your getting married put it in our heads," said Marie.



## CHAPTER XL.

My marriage took place on a balmy midsummer night, the happiest—the very happiest—day of my life.

Judge Bennett arrived on the noon train and I counted the hours until we should meet at the marriage altar. Mamma was at her best and that meant that every detail was perfect.

For Marie's benefit the ceremony was solemnized at the house, and when the judge stooped to kiss her, and receive her congratulations, she threw her arm gently around his neck and called him her dear brother whom "God had sent her."

She whispered to me, "He kisses beautifully, Frank. How happy you will be."

My answer was a silent hug.

The midnight train bore us away to the summer resort, from which place the Judge had made all necessary arrangements for us to proceed to our woodland retreat in the Adiron-



dacks. This retreat in the heart of mountain scenery had been his hunting ground the previous summer. It was far from human habitation, beyond the sight and sound of civilization, a wilderness without a road except the waters of the Saranac that broaden into lakes. Often and often the river descends in rapids, impassable by the lightest skiffs, which must be carried by guides through narrow paths in the thickets. On the banks of one of the lakes, in the very heart of this wilderness, our tents were pitched.

My first view of the spot filled me with delight. Andy had made a little clearing around his tent and came out from it, followed by a dog dear to hunters, to give us a grinning welcome. He led the way, with our luggage, up the winding path to the tent, which his skill in arranging green boughs within had made beautiful for us.

I seated myself on a camp stool and looked around. "I could stay here forever," I said.

Andy stood in the door showing his double row of white teeth from ear to ear.



"You have done well, Andy," said the Judge, "and now we want dinner!"

I did not don my tartan until the following morning, when we planned to spend the day in hunting. My husband was charmed with my costume, for he not only admired the bright colors, but was delighted with the freedom it gave. He called me——. It matters not what he called me, dear reader; henceforth I must be more chary of details.

I insisted on taking a few lessons in marksmanship before practicing on birds, for it did not occur to me that my light rifle would be called into requisition for anything more formidable than the feathered tribe would provide. In truth, I was loth to deprive even one of its members of a happy existence.

My precaution was well taken and the instruction I received proved of vital importance in our encounter with a bear, a few hours later. The Judge had shot and wounded the creature, and his double-barrelled rifle was empty, when it turned furiously upon him.

Although my heart was in my throat, and



my aim uncertain, the bullet from my little rifle sped to a vital part and the beast fell dead.

Judge Bennett said, "Frank, this is the third time you have stood between me and eternity. Ask what you will and it shall be given you."

"But for the instruction you gave me, I could not have done it," I said. "You see the importance of imparting *all* your knowledge to me. I shall have to study law."

"It would be a good discipline for your mind," he replied.

"But with whom could I study?"

"With me, of course; with whom else would you study?"

"Are you in earnest, Judge?"

"Never more in earnest in my life, Frank."

"Then it is settled. I'm glad I killed the bear!"

Andy rolled his eyes until but little besides the whites were visible, when he was informed of the death of Bruin.

"De Lawd bress us! A bar!" he exclaimed. "Laws, I'm skeered ef deys bars prowlin' 'round here."

Andy's timidity would not permit him to go



out of sight of our encampment for several days. He imagined every rustle among the trees portended the stealthy approach of the enemy dreaded, and would stand and stare in mortal terror until reassured of his safety.



## CHAPTER XLI.

Time at length came for us to bid adieu to our halcyonian retreat and return to the busy life of the city. Bernie, who had shortened her visit to her friend, was at home to welcome us. Her papa had written that he had wedded Frank's twin sister and that Frank was dead. Was it not true that Frank the wayward girl-boy was dead, and reincarnated in Frank the girl-wife and mother?

Bernie received me with open arms, declaring I was the exact image of my brother Frank. She called me Mamma Frank, which sounded strangely in my ears from a girl of her years. Strange but sweet, as it seemed to invest me with matronly dignity, and to cement the love I had borne the dear girl from our first acquaintance.

It was evident also that the Judge was pleased that Bernie thus chose to recognize the new relationship between us, of her own



free will. She had developed into a gay wayward creature, longing for the time to come when she could leave school for society. Devoted as I was to her interests, it was a relief when she was safely in the convent.

The last thing she said when she bade me good-bye was, "Mamma Frank, I'm going to run away from school and come home and have a good time." I should not have been surprised had she put her threat into execution.

Judge Bennett did not forget his invitation for me to study law with him, and I faithfully read Blackstone four hours of each day in the week. I also had hours for music and for household supervision. Sunday was our time to rest and enjoy each other's society. We seldom attended public worship, for church-going was a bore to the Judge.

Bernie returned home to spend the holidays bringing young friends with her, and the house rang with riotous pleasure. Strict discipline to which they were subjected at school, made them all the more lively when freed from its restraints. Miss Gay being in the city, accepted an invitation to spend Christmas



week with us. She proved very helpful in entertaining the young girls, for her kind and jolly nature won them all.

What is more delightful than the innocent ebullitions of youthful mirth? My physical condition rendered me peculiarly susceptible to the joyousness which the occasion called forth in the entire household. Bernie declared to me, confidentially, that her sainted mamma could never have endured such a hubbub.

"It's nothing but fun and frolic from morning till night, and the servants are all in it."

Christmas gifts flowed in from all quarters, and among them was a drawing from Marie, executed by herself. It was an immense improvement on the picture of the angel, the study of which was to make William good. It represented a babe in a cradle and underneath was written, in her own handwriting, "I dreamed it."

Was it intended to represent the infant Jesus, whose birth we were celebrating, or an infant of the future? Marie's dreams were apt to deal with coming events. Certain it is, a baby boy came to me the following June, and



even then, the Christmas smiles had not left my lips.

A more welcome gift, Heaven could not have bestowed. The fondest hopes of the Judge were realized.

"He is the image of you, Frank," he said, laying his hand caressingly on my shoulder.

"No," I replied, "the upper part of his face is yours, and the lower part mine. He has your brains. He will be a lawyer. Our little Gabriel will be a lawyer."

"Gabriel!" exclaimed the Judge, in astonishment. "Is that to be his name?"

"Yes, with your approval," I replied smilingly. "He will be the namesake of the angel Gabriel and of my old pastor, Gabriel Booth."

My husband indulged in an irreverent expression which he supplemented with the remark, "Our boy to be named for an angel and a preacher?"

"Of course; why not?" said I. "With the namesake of an angel and of a minister in the house, we don't need to go to church at all!"

"I give it up!" said the happy father, mollified by the hint; "let baby teach us religion."



So the child was christened according to my desire.

Miss Gay was one of the first to congratulate me, in person, and she put the seal of her approval on my choice of a name. "Thou hast done well," she said; "I trust thou hast given him a nature as heavenly as the name thou hast bestowed."

"I hope he will be as good as his namesake," I replied, "but I don't want him to be a minister. I want him to be a partner with us in the law."

"He may do good in any profession," said Miss Gay. "A spiritual nature will ever leap all barriers to accomplish its destiny."

"But what if he does not possess a spiritual nature?"

"Cultivate it—thee must cultivate it."

"How can I?"

"Keep him in the holy temple of love, and in the care of the great high priest, and with thy prayers stitch a little robe for him every year, the material of which shall be thy white example."



"Oh, Miss Gay, if I only could—if I only could."

"What is to hinder thee?"

"I do not say my prayers."

"But thee prays. Every earnest desire of the heart for good is a prayer, but, if thy conscience tells thee to say thy prayers in the name of all that is good, say them. Stifle not thy conscience, and listen, listen for the still small voice."

"The father said the babe is to lead us to religion," I replied. "I am sure my instruction began the moment he was put into my arms, for I was seized with a desire to ask God's blessing upon him."

Miss Gay's reply was interrupted by Bernie rushing into the room. She had been permitted to visit home for a vacation.

"Oh, mamma, where is he?" she exclaimed, giving me a hasty kiss; "where is my little brother?"

Next moment the babe was in her arms. "I'm afraid it will break all to pieces," she said, as she held it with trembling solicitude.

The infant was the youngest she had ever



fondled, and Bernie was rather awkward, but at the risk of seeing the little fellow twisted into a corkscrew, I permitted her to indulge her sisterly caresses.



## CHAPTER XLII.

"Not without you," was the decided reply the Judge had given my urgent request, that he would indulge himself in rest and recreation in the mountains.

Nurse had expressed the opinion that baby would thrive better at home in his own little crib, and I was inclined to yield to her judgment and remain in the city during the heated term. But the Judge was stubborn and Bernie pining for a change. Consequently, we again found ourselves hieing to the wilderness, baby, nurse and all. Three tents were pitched this time. Andy's and ours were in the old spot, and one for nurse and the children midway between the two.

In less than a week, Bernie had waded streams, caught fish and shot a bird. She had climbed every available tree within shouting distance, to demonstrate she could escape from bears, which Andy assured her were likely to



attack her. Having thus obtained an inkling of Andy's weakness, she had not neglected to growl horribly in the night watches, in close proximity to his tent. She made her indulgent parents the victims of numberless practical jokes, and nurse was constantly on her guard against her pranks, having barely escaped strangulation from the salt in her drinking cup, which the madcap had failed to drop on a bird's tail. The stern mandate of her father had been the means of insuring her little brother immunity from her serious interference, although she was suspected of imposing upon him sly caresses which he did not relish, and insisting that his noisy protest was the result of colic. Since catnip tea was the panacea for colic, Bernie, of course, held the baby while nurse made the tea.

Judge Bennett and myself indulged in long boat rides and rambles, leaving the family to care for itself. Hand in hand we climbed the mountain sides and visited our old haunts, grottos and springs, moss-grown caves and vine-hung nooks.

Ascending higher than had been our wont,



the last day of our sojourn, we seated ourselves upon a peculiarly formed, stony ridge, which projected over a cradle-like indenture among the rocks, lying in dark shadow a few feet beneath.

My husband was in his happiest and most affectionate mood. Laying his hand caressingly upon my shoulder, as he did so often, he said, "Frank, you have fulfilled every wish of my heart."

Such movement as I made in answer to his loverly declaration, invited his caress, and he clasped me in his arms. No tongue can tell, no pen relate the deep happiness of that sacred hour.

"Mine, forever mine," were the words that were on his lips, when a slight rustling sound from the stony cradle beneath the ledge, drew our eyes to the spot.

The Judge arose and peered down into the shadow. I looked over his stooping shoulder. We both saw a human face, white and pinched, with staring eyes, and a puckery mouth that seemed to be grinning at us. A busy little bird hopped about among the leaves and litter



gathered there. I do not know which of us first recognized the features of the dead, but I was the first to cry out, "Madam Laureola."

"Yes," said the Judge, solemnly, "I also knew her, but she went abroad before we were married, and I was not aware that she had returned."

"I heard she was abroad," I said. "What shall we do?"

Without replying, the Judge let himself down into the basin where the body lay. He examined it carefully.

"She must have been dead for days," he said. "She must be removed and buried."

"What is that in her hand?" I questioned, as he turned away.

He again stooped over the body and took from the stiffened fingers a rumpled paper, which he had not before observed.

Bringing it up into the clear light, he unfolded it. A mortal paleness overspread his features, and he shivered visibly as he glanced over the words inscribed thereon. I held out my hand for it, and he gave it to me in silence.



"*Mine, forever mine,*" were the words I read, followed by the ominous declaration, "*In three years from the time you read this, my spirit will claim yours!*"

"What does it mean?" said I.

The Judge was still pale and silent. He mechanically moved a short distance away and sat down under a tree.

"Sit by me, Frank; sit close, and I will tell you. If there is an immutable law in the universe, it is the law of retribution. 'It all seems like a dream, now,' he continued, "but this paper reminds me that I am dealing with stern reality. With all my fondest hopes realized, at the very acme of bliss, I am confronted with a wrong I perpetrated on one who never forgave me. We were both young. I was not yet twenty, and in the ignorance of youth I lost control of myself. I make no excuse.

"The girl was in the family, sewing for my mother, during one of my college vacations, and listened with credulity to my youthful love-making. She possessed remarkable characteristics, and these became more pronounced



as she dwelt upon my desertion. Unceasingly she haunted my life and became known as Madam Laureola. I never allowed my wife to be left alone; she could not have borne the story I am telling you, from the lips now sealed in death.

“You know, Madam Laureola was a clairvoyant and claimed mesmeric and necromantic power. Of these things, I know nothing, but she has always been the disturber of my peace, and I never rid myself of her persecutions until you became my wife. She then agreed to go abroad and not return, but said at the moment when our cup of bliss should be full, she would dash it from our lips, and ever afterward a pall would hang over me until she should claim my spirit.

“I am not afraid of her,” he said, drawing himself up; “for I am not superstitious, but I wish this had not happened.

“Frank, have your feelings toward me changed?” he asked suddenly, looking down upon my drooping head.

I knew not what reply to make, but desirous of soothing his mind, I said, “I did not love



you in the past because I thought you perfect. I loved you because I loved you, and for that reason I love you still."

I knew he was satisfied, for his caressing hand immediately found its way to my shoulder.

"I hope there is nothing in this affair that can be brought into the courts," I said, laying my hand on his. "It would be awkward for you to appear as defendant in a murder case."

He started. "You have chosen the profession in which you will succeed, Frank. I had not thought of that. You have put me on my guard. I will see to it that only the court in the beyond tries this case."



## CHAPTER XLIII.

Although the Judge had so decidedly reiterated that he was not superstitious, I discerned in him, from that time, unusual indications of restlessness. I was inclined to attribute this to the shock which the discovery of Madam Laureola's body had given him, as well as to the implied threat in the writing taken from her hand. His manner, so foreign to his positive nature and steady nerves, gave me some uneasiness, but I hoped time would restore him to his wanted equilibrium. I peeped at him anxiously many times a day from behind the portières in the office, which concealed me from view, and noticed he was abnormally startled at any sudden sound, and that he often glanced over his shoulder as if hearing approaching footsteps.

As time passed, I became alarmed, and hoping a change would be beneficial, I proposed a



trip abroad, without broaching my fears to him.

"I should like to go to the south of France," I said, "and spend the time in the study of law, until I am ready to be admitted to the bar. Society would have no demands on us there, baby would escape our cold winters, and by the time we return Bernie will be ready to graduate."

"And what should I do?" inquired the Judge.

"Take care of me and follow your favorite geological pursuits. You ought to live in the open. Four walls are too cramping for one of your temperament."

To my surprise the Judge readily acquiesced in my plans, and so soon as arrangements could be made, we proceeded on the journey to sunny France.

Nothing of special importance to us occurred during our residence abroad, except the birth of a baby girl whose span of life ended the hour in which she was born. The wee waxen features were the exact counterpart of her papa's, and he was greatly depressed on ac-



count of the loss. His nervous symptoms which had given me so much uneasiness seemed more pronounced.

I managed to keep him interested in my studies, and plead many imaginary cases before him, to which he listened with indulgent tolerance. My aim was to bring a smile to his face and my argument always ended when I had accomplished my object.

Our little Gabriel was walking and talking when the time came for us to return home. He had developed one remarkable trait. He refused to say his prayers.

"No, no, no!" he would say, shaking his curly little head when I attempted to persuade him to repeat the simple petition beginning, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

By his stubborn refusal, I was reminded of my own delinquency. That my refusal to pray for Nathan had caused me to sin against the soul of my child, as well as my own soul, was a constant sorrow. I resolved with my whole heart to efface the impression thus unconsciously made. My love for the child amounted to idolatry. In him had I sounded



the depths of a mother's joy, and in him only could I sound the depths of a mother's love.

A letter from Bernie hastened our departure for New York. She wrote: "Be sure and come in time to see me graduate. It will be the happiest day of my life. I intend to marry as soon as I am out of school. Papa is to select a husband for me from among the scores of young men who have been casting longing eyes toward the convent, lo, these many years. If you don't come right home, I shall take my pick myself."

"What does the child mean by such nonsense?" said the Judge.

"Oh, nothing at all," I replied; "it is the effervescence of youthful folly. She will be like a bird freed from a cage. We had better sail on the first steamer."

In a few weeks we had the pleasure of seeing our wild little Bernie numbered among a dozen or more sweet girl graduates. She stood somewhat in awe of her papa, and gave him no occasion to criticize her conduct in his presence, but with me her freedom was untrammelled. Her voluble tongue was rather



encouraged than checked, for I fully realized that a mother is the only safe receptacle for a daughter's confidence.

"I have an admirer already, mamma," she said, coming in from a walk, flushed with excitement and exercise. "He is the brother of Maude Green, who graduated in our class, and he heard my valedictory. She introduced us, and he wants to call on me. Isn't that jolly? It's something to have a chance to speak to a nice young man after being shut up in a convent for nearly a lifetime. I declare, mamma, I shall never be happy until I am introduced into society."

"You know we shall soon go to my mother's for the summer," said I, "and you may find it a little dull, for poor Marie is confined to her chair all the time."

"I shall go out by myself," replied the willful girl. "I'm going to have a good time wherever I go. I've been shut up long enough. If I can't go anywhere else, I will go to prayer-meeting and make faces at the minister."

I smiled when I thought of Bernie's making



faces at Mr. Booth, and she, encouraged by my evident amusement, continued her giddy remarks.

"I worried the good father's soul pretty near out of him, at the convent, pretending I wanted to confess. I told the girls I was more than half in love with him and meant to take the veil because he couldn't marry me."

"Why are you so anxious to marry?" I asked.

"O, for a change!" said the young lady, saucily. "I'm not going to marry for love, for then I should do everything my husband wanted me to do, and I'm determined to have my own way. I never have had it. I have always been kept in leading strings, and I don't like it. I want to be free."



## CHAPTER XLIV.

Before leaving for mamma's home, I was admitted to the bar, and gaily assured the Judge I would be ready to practice on my return. The only answer he made was to lay his hand fondly upon my shoulder. I looked into his face and saw an expression which startled me.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Nothing; nothing at all, Frank. Sometimes of late, I have been seized with a strange foreboding which I do not understand, for you know, I am not superstitious."

I had not forgotten that it would be exactly three years the last day of the coming summer since he had taken the paper from the hand of the dead, on which was written the ominous words: "In three years from the time you read this my spirit will claim yours."

Like the Judge, I was unconscious that superstition lurked within my nature, and



scarcely realizing how close was my sympathy with his emotions, I said with a wave of my hand, "Give forebodings to the wind; to indulge them is to invite sorrow!"

In making preparations for our summer trip, my husband was particular that I should know all the details of his business, and arranged everything with great precision, even to the writing of his will. Some impending danger seemed constantly in his mind, and I was glad when we were fairly started on the trip to mamma's.

Bernie was in high glee all the way and kept us in such good spirits that we almost forgot the shadowy thing which had unconsciously haunted us so long.

Mamma's household, exclusive of the servants, had narrowed down to four, Marie, Mr. Booth, Mr. Gale and William. These all gave us a royally warm welcome, and I settled down in my old room, where Bernie, Gabriel and nurse usually came to discuss family matters.

Judge Bennett received a telegram soon after our arrival, announcing the sudden illness of



his partner, and returned without delay. It was the first time we had been separated since our marriage, and neither of us was reconciled to the dispensation. He promised to return at an early date or send for me, so I made the best of the situation and engaged in a round of visits among my old friends, for whose benefit little Gabriel was on exhibition most of the time.

Longing to be relieved of petticoats, he had a habit of trimming his skirts to the waist and strutting about in his drawers. Stubbornly he refused to engage in devotional exercises, nor did he until Marie undertook his case. She told him sweet little stories of beautiful angels listening to little boys who said their prayers, but he only shook his head and said "No, no."

One day, Mr. Booth came into Marie's room, and lifted the child to his knee, patting his head and calling him a good little boy.

"No, no, Gabel bad, Gabel won't say prayers," replied the little fellow, looking reproachfully at Marie.

"Bring him to me, Mr. Booth," said Marie,



with tears in her eyes, "I want to kiss him, for I love him and the angels love him."

"I'll say my prayers, Aunt Mawee," said Gabriel, relenting for the first time as he received her tearful caress. "I'll say my prayers for you and the angels."

Love overcometh all things. Bernie looked admiringly from Marie to Mr. Booth.

"It took a saint and an angel to bring my stubborn little brother to terms," she said afterward in the privacy of my room, "and I shall call one Saint Marie, and the other the Angel."

"Does Mr. Booth impress you as being so good?" I asked. Bernie blushed.

"He impresses me as being too good for this world or for anybody in it," she replied. "That's the worst of it. I would as soon think of making faces at a divine being, as at his majesty and beauty. You have brought me here to associate with saints and angels, and I'm not ready for it until I get to heaven."

"It has always seemed to me that you greatly admired good people."

"Indeed, I do, mamma. There is nothing I



admire so much as goodness. I admired Sister Agathe at the convent because she was so good, and the father also. I would not want to live in the world if there was no goodness here, but I used to think, when I was fettered there with my books and prayers, I would like a change, not to absolute badness, but to a little more worldly freedom, and here I am in the strait-jacket of goodness still."

"Try to be patient a little longer," I said, "and you shall have all the gayety you desire."

"I may not want it by that time," replied the impatient girl, with a faint sigh. "Summer days are long, and the lives of butterflies are short. How do we know what may happen between now and winter?"

"That reminds me," I said, "that you have not a good portrait of yourself, and while your papa is away, Mr. Gale might paint one."

"If he could make one of me as beautiful as Saint Marie's, I would consent," said Bernie, glancing at herself in the mirror opposite.

"Your papa would be delighted with a portrait of you in your graduating gown."

"Anything to please papa and put Old Sober-



sides on his mettle," was the careless answer, and the matter was settled.

"Old Sobersides" was Bernie's appropriate appellation for Mr. Gale.



## CHAPTER XLV.

"Where is Gabriel?" I asked the nurse, as I was about to go to dinner.

"In the minister's study, ma'am. The minister asked for him."

In passing, I heard my little son's voice mingling with Mr. Booth's, and to give them a surprise, I tiptoed toward the open study door, where I saw them without being seen. Mr. Booth sat in a position to give me a side view of his face, and of Gabriel's who was clasped in his arms. He was straining the child to his breast and kissing him rapturously. Gabriel seemed pleased with the passionate embrace, and when let loose, threw his arms around his friend's neck, crying, "I love oo better than papa."

Again Mr. Booth showered kisses and caresses upon him, murmuring as he held the little face in his hands, "So like her, so like her."



I knew not whether to retreat or advance, but the child chanced to turn his head and spied me.

"Mamma, tum and see Mr. Booth div me a Stoch (Scotch) tiss!"

I went to the door. Mr. Booth arose, his face aglow, with Gabriel still in his arms. "I have been having a farewell interview with my little namesake," he said. "I expect to start on my vacation to-morrow, and may not return before you leave."

"Is it possible! Going so soon? I thought we would see Mr. Turner about the antique chair before you left."

"I was at his house last night," said Mr. Booth, "and the man in charge said he had gone to England, having been suddenly summoned on account of the death of a relative."

"I am so sorry," I said, "for it was my intention to make him an offer for the chair, that he would be apt to accept. Would you be willing to act as my agent in the matter when he returns?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Booth. "But I have very little hope of changing his decision,



not to part with it. The First Owner might have some influence with him, however, as Turner said he told him he was desirous of making further communications to you. Perhaps you might regain possession of the chair, for a time, by agreeing to return it. I myself made overtures to him of that character, that I might test more fully for my own satisfaction the remarkable phenomenon of which you and Turner have told me. It seems there must be a hallucination connected with it, calculated to convince the most unbelieving in spirit manifestations. From what I have heard of spiritualistic seances, I should say my sitting with Turner and through him receiving information from the First Owner of the chair, concerning my ancestors, is very like consulting a medium—or rather like one under mesmeric influence.”

“But I was not under mesmeric influence, Mr. Booth, when the First Owner appeared to me.”

“Are you sure?”

“Why, of course. Who was there to mesmerize me?”



"The chair. Some claim that to look fixedly on an object which has been manipulated by a mesmerist, will put certain people into a mesmeric sleep, or in a condition in which the mind is active, and discerns things not apparent to it, in its normal state."

"If that theory could be established," I said, "then mesmeric or other occult influences might be imparted to all furniture. When Marie was a little girl, she insisted that sitting in different chairs gave her impressions of the characteristics of those who previously occupied them. She could readily select the chair in which you had last been seated."

"That carries the matter beyond my comprehension," said Mr. Booth. "She must possess a sense more acute than the scent of a bloodhound, to be able to make such discoveries."

"She used to call it her mind smelling. But Mr. Booth, returning to the subject of our discussion, I assure you I did not look fixedly at the chair, as you suggested. I saw the First Owner in it many times as plainly as I see you. I have proof that some of the things he told me are true, and I believe they are all true."



Mr. Booth smiled. "I think if I owned the chair, and a spirit should seem to appear in it and talk to me, I would doubt the evidence of my senses, and conclude I was laboring under a delusion."

"You are like Thomas," I replied, "who would not believe that Jesus appeared to the other disciples, after his crucifixion, until he told him to thrust his hand into his side, where the spear had pierced him."

"That was an exceptional case," said Mr. Booth. "If in the future scientific investigation shall demonstrate the possibility that the spirit of the owner of a chair may return and occupy it for generations after leaving the body, I will be better prepared to believe what now seems to me a hallucination."

Mr. Booth's tone was so tolerant and sincere that I began to wonder if it were possible my imagination had played me false, or that some mysterious influence had emanated from the inanimate object, and I was silent.

"You know I do not question your sincerity," said Mr. Booth, with delicate tact, "it is



simply a question in my mind as to the possibility that you may have been deceived in the matter. I noticed a peculiar expression on the face of Turner as I sat by him before the chair, and it has since occurred to me that he might have been in a clairvoyant state, and his communications came from my own mind, which was before fully established in all he said, instead of that of the First Owner. As I have intimated, I am not sure I would be satisfied if I were to own the chair and pass through an experience similar to yours, although our family coat-of-arms carved upon it, indicates that it was once the property of my ancestors."

"I hope the property of your illustrious ancestor will some day be yours and then we will see what you will do," I said.

"I shall leave it to you in my will," was the reply.

"O, Mr. Booth, how cruel! You know you will outlive me."

"I hope not," was his calm reply, as he turned toward Gabriel, who had slipped from his arms and was tugging at the skirt of his



coat, vociferating lustily, "Tum, Mr. Booth, dinner is weady. The bell has wung."

I advanced to the dining-room, Mr. Booth following with the child.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

Judge Bennett returned unexpectedly. It was a flying visit. He had but a day to remain, as his partner had not yet recovered sufficiently to warrant leaving him for a longer period. I was in raptures at seeing him and was impatient when he was out of my sight for a moment.

Bernie declared poutingly, that I was selfish to appropriate him so entirely to myself, but Gabriel scarcely noticed him after his first greeting. The child was more interested in Mr. Booth's preparations for his departure, the packing of a trunk attracted him more than the society of his parents who were absorbed in each other.

The Judge did not seem to notice the child's infatuation until the moment of Mr. Booth's adieux. We were in the parlor when he approached with Gabriel at his heels. His handshaking with the Judge over, he extended the



same courtesy to me; but Gabriel was not satisfied.

"Tiss mamma, Mr. Booth, tiss mamma!"

I saw a gleam of fire in my husband's eyes as Mr. Booth, with a flush on his face, stooped over the child to give him a parting caress. But Gabriel would not let him go. He clung to him with tears and sobs until it became necessary to call the nurse to take him away, and, although resisting her with all his might, he was borne kicking and screaming from the room. His papa was disturbed.

"The child must be disciplined," he said.

"He is old enough to be taught better."

"He is like his papa," I replied, "very affectionate and slightly obstinate."

A ghost of a smile passed over the features of the Judge, which was followed by a shadow. He laid his hand upon my shoulder. "Frank," he said, "if I were to die, would you marry again?"

"No! never!"

"Are you sure?" There was a ring of satisfaction in his tone.

"Quite sure," and I added a tender epithet.



I knew the assurance pleased the Judge, for the position of his hand on my shoulder indicated as much. I had learned to read his mind through the impressions his touch gave me, which varied with his emotions.

Our backs being toward the door, Bernie had entered and heard what had been said for my ear alone, but she wisely refrained from alluding to it in the presence of her papa.

After he had left for New York, however, she freely mentioned the matter to me, and "wondered what possessed papa."

"He acted as if he thought he were about to die," said she, "and he looked sideways like a person expecting something he dreaded. Anyway, he is not like my beautiful papa, and I would like to know what is the matter with him. If you know, mamma, I wish you would tell me."

Madame Laureola's face, which we had seen in the stone cradle, high up the mountain side, arose before me, and I was silent in contemplation of the great mystery.

"I believe you know," she cried, looking eagerly into my face; "is trouble coming?"



"Why should trouble come?" I replied. "Your papa is in perfect health and his affairs are prosperous. No trouble ought to come to us."

"Of course it ought not," said Bernie, with light hearted reassurance. "I presume papa was worried at leaving us. He is so devoted to you, mamma. I am almost jealous of you."

"His heart is large enough for both, Bernie. Don't permit yourself to indulge in jealousy."

"How can I help it, mamma?"

"Just as you control anger or any wrong feeling. When it comes, use all your will power to banish it."

"Mr. Booth says we must pray."

"That is right—pray. Prayer will divert your mind from wrong thinking, and a blessing follow the sincere desire for good in your heart."

"You think so, mamma? I am surprised! I imagined you and papa never prayed, and wondered why you wanted Gabriel taught to say prayers. I have not said a prayer since I left the convent myself, and I have my mamma's beautiful prayer-book too. She was not a



Roman Catholic; she was an Episcopalian, you know. Which religion do you think is the true religion?"

"True religion, Bernie, is to love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself."

"Oh, dear! I'm afraid I never shall have true religion, for I never can love my neighbor as myself, and I never can love God with all my heart. I shall always love myself, I am sure, a little better than anything else."

"If you love good, Bernie, you love God, for all goodness is of God, and if you love others beside yourself, you love your neighbor; but it is only by cultivation that these traits will gain the ascendancy in your character and life."

"How may I cultivate goodness, mamma?"

"Love is the purifying flame that consumes selfishness—deep, deep love that is born of the divine in man."

"Oh, I can love," said Bernie, with a queer grimace. "I know I can love, but the trouble with me is, it is not always the good that I love."

"That is the trouble with us all," I replied.



"I have only theorized, but Mr. Booth and Marie live the truth."

"Oh, I couldn't follow Mr. Booth's example and give away all I have, and devote all my time to doing good. No, indeed; people might suffer before I would do that; neither would I spend my time as Marie does in cuddling up sick children with flowers and broths. Tell me something easier I may do."

"Would it be easier for you to array yourself in a beautiful gown and drive to church, worship on your knees from your gold-clasped prayer-book, bow at the altar for holy communion, give generous heed to the offertory, and regulate your conduct according to church rules?"

"Indeed it would, mamma. I could do those things, but I don't think I could enjoy being good in any other way. I certainly could not do good for the sake of being good as Mr. Booth and Marie do. They are natural saints and I am not, any more than you are."

Bernie's last thoughtless remark cut me to the quick, for it indicated that in her opinion, my religious convictions were on a level with



hers, while I flattered myself they were on a higher plane. Bernie noticed my abstraction, and construing it to mean displeasure, she hastened to explain. "I did not mean to say, mamma, that you are not better than I am, for I know you are a thousand times better, but I meant in kind we are the same, as is also papa, but not in measure. We are none of us willing to do as Mr. Booth preached about Jesus doing, and in fact, I don't see many people who are."



## CHAPTER XLVII.

Summer was far advanced when Judge Bennett came to take us home. Our prophetic dreamer, Marie, saw a vision, the secret of which she confided to my keeping, with many sighs. In spite of my efforts to banish all superstitious feelings, my mind was strangely affected by it.

Marie said, "I saw in my dream a galaxy of stars, swinging in space, and every star was as large as the moon, and had a human face. I thought all the angels in heaven were looking through them at the people in this world. Stars swung in a great glistening arch stretching as far as I could see, and other stars from all directions came and joined the company. The air was full of music. It came from the arch, and the single floating stars answered back, just as mamma and I used to trill to each other when she wanted me from my play. Oh, it was a glorious sight! So white and light!



Whiter and brighter than sun shining on snow! At times a single star would float out into space, as if attracted by another, and the two stars would drift away together. I did not see a single face clearly—they were all so far away—but at last one came so near that I saw the features distinctly, and it seemed to be hovering over this house. It had a queer drawey mouth, and its bright eyes were looking toward an approaching object; so I looked that way, and saw Judge Bennett coming. He turned into a star and went off with the star that seemed to be waiting for him. Just as the whole scene was slowly vanishing, William appeared before me, with his arms outstretched toward the stars, and I was so afraid that he would turn into a star and join them that I screamed and awoke."

"What can the dream mean?" she said after a short pause, a slight tremor discernible in her tone.

"O, nothing!" I replied, carelessly, trying in vain to throw off my own unpleasant impressions, and reassure her "unless it means William is reaching after the honors that would



make him a star in his profession as Judge Bennett is in his. You know William is very ambitious."

"He is ambitious for my sake," said Marie, a faint flush mounting her pale cheek, while the frill of lace around her fair throat was shaken with the excess of her girlish emotions.

"Are you still so devoted to William?" I asked, with a view of drawing from her an expression of her affection for him which I knew existed in her heart. But true womanly reserve had grown within her and she hesitated before answering.

"You remember how silly I used to be about him, but I have grown older now, and, I hope, more sensible, although I am still foolish about him, as you can see. I don't want him to leave us and go to the stars. I hope my dream did not mean that we are to lose him or the Judge."

"For God's sake!" I exclaimed, "don't speak of it; the bare suggestion is torture to me."

Our long conversation had wearied Marie, and she rested her head against the back of her chair, her stray locks of gold glinting against



the crimson cushion. Her eyelids quivered and tears rolled from beneath them.

"I can't help it," she said in a broken voice, "that dream makes my heart ache dreadfully."

I arose and went to the window. Judge Bennett and William were approaching in the distance. William was a splendid specimen of physical manhood, nearly as tall as the Judge, but lacking his distinguished air.

"They are coming," I said—"the Judge and William—and neither of them look like leaving us for the stars."

Marie lifted her head and turned to see them.

"How strong and grand they are," she said, brushing the tears from her face, "it doesn't seem as if they could ever die."

"It is not likely they will for many years," I replied, resolutely ignoring the haunting fear that beset me as a result of Madam Laureola's dreadful threat. I had long doubted if the mysterious writing was really intended for him, but when I ventured to suggest it, Judge Bennett promptly replied, "She meant it for me."



But a change had come, and he was in the best of health and spirits. As they ascended the steps, I noticed his usually firm steady step was almost buoyant. They were evidently discussing the political situation, and in William's resonant voice, he said, "If Horace Greeley and the rest of the fanatics keep this up, there will be a fight."

Marie caught the word fight, and was at once alarmed.

"Did he say he'd been fighting," she said.

Before I could answer, they appeared in the open door. William heard Marie's question, and laughed good-naturedly.

"No, Marie, I have not been fighting this time. I have only been threatening. How would you like to see me the general of an army?"

I did not catch Marie's low reply, as the Judge and I started to our room. "William is a promising youth," said he "and has the making of a man in him, but it is strange he is so devoted to Marie when there is no hope of her ever being able to rise from her chair."



"His is the true love," I said, "he gives all and asks for nothing in return."

"I understand it," said the Judge. "I would rather have you in Marie's condition than not to have you at all."

We had entered our room and the Judge closed the door.

"This looks like breaking up," he said, glancing at the articles of clothing that were strewn about, ready for the trunks.

"Yes; we go day after to-morrow, you know."

"None too soon, Frank. I don't exactly like the way things look between the artist Gale and Bernie. He has made a fine portrait of her, but that is all we want of him."

"Of course! I, too, am ambitious for Bernie. She shall have a brilliant send-off next winter, and the young men she will meet will make her forget she ever saw Mr. Gale. She is very impressionable, and will probably dip her feet a number of times into love's pellucid pool, before she takes the final plunge."

My husband laid his hand tenderly on my shoulder. "You imagine Bernie is like her



father, but God forbid that like him she should thoughtlessly bring life-long remorse upon herself."

"Don't speak of it!" I replied. "It is all over now. Let the memory of the past mistake be buried with Madam Laureola."

"Although not superstitious," said the Judge, "I was relieved when the day of doom, which she predicted, had passed."

"Why, you have forgotten!" I thoughtlessly replied. "It will be three years to-morrow forenoon since you took the paper from her hand. Do you not remember, it was the last day of summer?"

The Judge took out his note-book and studied it carefully.

"Sure enough! You are correct. I had miscalculated. To-morrow then will be the day on which the madam's prediction that her spirit will return and claim another will prove true or false; it also remains to be seen whose spirit she will claim."

"It will not be yours," I declared with emphasis; "it will not be yours."



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

"Papa! Where's papa this last day of summer, and this last day of our visit, too?" cried Bernie, peering into the room where mamma and I were chatting.

"Will nobody answer?" said the intruder, impatiently. "I've found a wonderful stone in a hole Gabriel dug under a rose bush. I'm sure it will interest papa. He knows so much about geology. It may be a petrification; a petrified fairy, you know. It has a sort of a face with a queer drawey little mouth, that seemed to be grinning up at us as it lay in the sun. Would you like to see it, mamma?"

"Not just now, Bernie; I left your papa in the library reading the paper."

Bernie went in search of him.

Truth is, my superstitious fears were answerable for the Judge denying himself his morning stroll. All night I had grappled with an awful premonition of evil which I



could not master, and morning still found me fighting the mysterious force. Madam Laureola's written words passed and re-passed before my eyes in letters of fire, while darkness lasted, and the welcome sunlight gave but little relief. I was, however, able to nerve myself to give no sign of the conflict in the presence of the Judge, who, I alone could see, was not in a comfortable frame of mind. He had taken his hat to go out when I called his attention to the morning paper, which, strangely enough, he had not read directly after breakfast, as was his habit.

"My dear," I said, as he seated himself, "may I go with you when you take your walk?"

He answered hesitatingly, "It has just occurred to me that I should write some letters this morning; would afternoon suit you as well?"

"Better," I replied, "for I have still some preparations to make for our journey."

"Yes, my journey!" he remarked absently, and began glancing down the newspaper, while I went to the room where Bernie found me.



Bernie had been gone but a short time, when mamma and I heard piercing shrieks from the library.

"It is Bernie; what can have happened?" exclaimed mamma, rushing toward the stairway. I attempted to follow, but for an instant was unable to take a step. "Mamma!" I faintly called, but she heard not, and the sound of flying footsteps with Bernie's prolonged screaming, effected a quick reaction. My courage returned, and I was in the library scarcely a moment behind her.

There sat the Judge in an easy chair, with staring eyes, and face of ashen hue. He grasped in his hand the thing Bernie had found under the rose bush.

He was dead! All efforts to resuscitate him were in vain. He had gone from us, nevermore to return in the flesh!

When Bernie recovered from her terrible experience sufficiently to relate what had occurred during his last moments, her communication surprised me.

"I would not tell it to any one else," she said; "but papa acted so strangely when I



gave him the stone. He asked, 'Where did you get it?' and when I said, 'Under the rose-bush,' he groaned and began to breathe hard and roll up his eyes and turn pale. I was dreadfully frightened, and when he said, 'Call mamma,' I began to scream for you to come, for I dared not leave him. He never spoke again, but looked up to the last and held the stone tight in his hand."

"What became of the stone?"

"Your mamma has it. I never want to see it again; it would only remind me of the way I lost papa."

I was anxious to see the stone, but when I asked mamma about it, she replied, "Dr. Jones has it, and when he returns it, I will give it to you. It is a strangely interesting specimen of petrification."

In a confidential conversation with Marie, however, I learned something more about the stone. She was deeply stirred by the tragic death. "I wonder," she said, laying her hand tenderly on my arm, "if my star dream will come as true in William's case as it has with the Judge. I am sure now, it meant the Judge



would go away beyond the stars, and, O, what would I do, if William should go, too!"

"I had forgotten the dream, Marie, but it is not at all likely that it was a warning."

"O, yes, I'm sure it was," she said, confidently, "for I saw the stone which the Judge held in his hand when he was called away. Bernie showed it to me when she first found it. She said she was going to show it to her papa, but she did not know where he was. It looked like a stone doll, and when I turned it over in my hand, I thought of my dream, for the face had a queer little screwy mouth, just like that of the star, with which the Judge disappeared."

Marie again referred to William. Her solicitude for him was overpowering. It seemed to pervade her every thought.

"Judge Bennett," said she, "had planned to give William every advantage in the study of his art. He was to have gone abroad, and Mr. Gale said would return a great artist."

"William shall go abroad for study, if he so desires," I promptly responded. "If he can not go with the Judge, he shall by himself, and perhaps the spirit of his departed friend



will be permitted to watch over him for good when the broad ocean shall separate you."

"I dread having him go away, even for a few years," said Marie, with a sigh.



## CHAPTER XLIX.

Marie's remark elicited no reply from me. I was wondering, as we sat there in the silence, how long I should be separated from him whose body lay in its last sleep, under the same roof with us!

The house was still as the grave. Every one moved softly and spoke in undertones. Even Gabriel's childish prattle was hushed, for his curly head was closely nestled on his pillow for the night.

Suddenly the doorbell rang sharply. We heard running to and fro, and presently deep groans fell upon our ears.

"It is William," cried Marie, in a terrified voice. "Oh, what has happened?"

"I will see," I said, groping my way out of the now dark room.

I found William in mamma's private parlor, stretched upon a sofa, surrounded by the men who had brought him home. Great drops of



blood and perspiration rolled from his brow, which mamma was wiping away. He was breathing heavily.

From one of the men I learned that he had been shot while defending a young girl against the attack of two ruffians, one of whom had thus wreaked his vengeance upon him.

Just as I turned away to break the sad news to my poor sister, William opened his eyes and feebly gasped, "Marie."

Two of the men who had so kindly brought William to his friends, placed Marie's chair beside him. He saw her, and a satisfied expression passed over his drawn features.

"Marie," he faltered, "forgive me, and care for the poor girl I tried to save."

His words were followed by a faint gurgle in his throat, and he passed away.

Marie lost consciousness, and in that condition was carried to her room. When her swoon had passed, I was bending over her, bathing her brow.

"I believe I have been asleep," she said, with a questioning look and a long drawn sigh.



I kissed her, and, taking her hand in mine, sat down beside her. My lips were dumb.

Just then mamma came in, and seeing that Marie had recovered, she tenderly stroked her head. "Poor child," she said, "God will sustain you."

Marie uttered a sharp low cry.

"I remember it all now. William is dead. Oh, how can I bear it!"

Mamma looked pitifully at both of us. "Weep together, my dear children," she said and left us alone.

But neither of us could weep. We sat staring into each other's dry eyes far into the night, while we talked of our loved and lost.

I rehearsed the meager facts I had learned of William's encounter with his murderer, and Marie's only comment was, "He gave his life for a poor girl and he asked me to care for her."

"It was a noble act," I said, "and William was a hero to imperil his life for a stranger."

"If you were to praise him ever so much it would not bring him back," said the heart-broken girl. "If only I could pour out my



heart in praise of him. When I told him my star dream I warned him to be careful; I told him how precious he was to me, and he said he was not more precious to me than I was to him. He said he knew he would some day find a doctor who could cure me. Some of the things he said are too sacred to repeat, even to you, Frank, but I can not stop talking about him. I know if I stop, I shall die. I know you are thinking of the Judge every moment I am talking of William, but you can keep your thoughts to yourself and I can not. I must think aloud to-night. I just feel that I must."

I tenderly pressed Marie's trembling hand. "I know how you feel."

"O, no," she replied. "You don't know how I feel, and I don't know how you feel, but we both know we have lost the dearest thing in life to us."

"We shall find our loved ones again," I said, as much to encourage my fainting heart as to comfort Marie.

My words awakened in her distracted mind new and painful thoughts.

"Where, oh, where shall I find William?" she



exclaimed, with passionate earnestness. I had not thought of it before but now recollected William had not been baptized into the church.

She fell back clenching her hands and her features twitched spasmodically. She was in throes of agony for the life of William's soul. I thought of him who hung upon the cross, and my thought involuntarily found expression in words to which Marie listened. What was Marie's love for William when compared with Christ's love for the world—He who was lifted up that He might draw all men unto Him. Would William be left out?

"Oh, if he is," exclaimed Marie, "I want to go where he is. Heaven would not be heaven without him. I would go to hell if he were there!"

"So would Jesus," I replied. "His love for the world would take him to hell to rescue it, if it were there. Trust His love and mercy, Marie, and take courage; William will meet you."

Marie's muscles relaxed and assumed their normal condition.

"You comfort me, Frank. But I wish Mr.



Booth was here to verify your words, which are so sweet to me. You know, Frank, since you stopped saying your prayers, and attend church so seldom, I have been afraid you would go to the bad place, and I could not depend upon your religion. You don't know how I have prayed for you and William."

"Your prayers will be answered, you little saint. Keep on praying for us. Pray that William's soul may find rest in the bosom of its God—if it has not already—and pray that my soul may find rest also in the bosom of its Father. Pray for the speedy salvation of all souls."

"Why will you not pray, Frank, as you tell me?"

"Because—because—I will tell you some other time, Marie. You are exhausted now, and should sleep."

"Oh, how can I sleep when William lies dead in the house?"



## CHAPTER L.

From my window the next day I saw a shabbily dressed young girl walk past the house in a troubled, embarrassed way. She stopped at the gate, put her hand on the latch, but did not lift it. She passed on—returned and stood before the gate. This time she lifted the latch, but allowed it to fall. She passed on, and again returned. But the third time there was an air of determination about her, and she entered, slamming the gate behind her, as if to keep her courage up, and resolutely approached the door.

Mr. Gale, whose friendly services had been invaluable in our hours of trial, answered the bell. The few words passing between himself and the visitor, whom I supposed to be a beggar, reached my listening ear.

“May I see the young man that died here last night?” she asked in an agitated voice.

“Who are you?” was Mr. Gale’s reply.



"I'm the girl he fit to save," was her answer.

He took her to the room where William's body lay shrouded for the tomb. "Here," I said, was a providential opportunity to gratify the desire Marie had expressed, of becoming acquainted with the person commended to her care by her lost friend.

As I softly entered the room, the girl stood in her rags and tatters, bending sorrowfully over the body of him who had been the means of saving her from ruin. A tear dropped on his folded hands as she raised her weeping eyes from his face.

"He died for me," she sobbed.

It was a picture for an artist.

I persuaded her to accompany me to Marie's room, which at first she was unwilling to do.

She was still rubbing her eyes with her hand when we entered. At the sight of Marie, she stood still in wonder not unmixed with awe.

Marie lay with closed eyes in her chair, her angelic face in full relief against the crimson cushion. Her tiny waxen hands folded resignedly upon her breast.



"Is she dead, too?" asked the girl, with a frightened look.

Marie opened her eyes and gave a start at the apparition confronting her. I hastened to explain, and what I said opened afresh the fountain of the girl's tears, for it made known to her William's solicitude for her welfare, which was expressed in his latest breath.

"He looks like Bill," she sobbed.

Marie regarded her intently, without interrupting her flow of grief. There was nothing ordinary about the girl. From the tallow-pomaded elf-locks, twisted gracefully below the old straw hat—perched upon the back of her head—to the bottom of the scanty attire, flapping her ankles, the hand of genius was manifest. Even her rags were uncommon, bearing the distinction of having been darned together with twine and bits of colored yarn, in truly artistic fashion. A startling twist had been given her draped overskirts, covering a rent in her dress, which still impudently claimed recognition.

A look of pity was in Marie's face, as her visitor's rough hands covered her eyes and



shaded her quivering lips. My sister waited patiently until the hands dropped, and made the overskirt do service in wiping away her tears. Then she turned her large luminous grey eyes—the most striking feature of her interesting face—full upon Marie. Marie told me afterward that there was something in their expression that reminded her of William's eyes.

A pink flush daintily touched the invalid's pale cheeks as she said, "What is your name?"

"Grace," answered the girl.

"Grace, could you sit with me a while? I want to talk with you."

Grace hesitated. "I'll ketch it if I do, and may be I'll ketch it anyway. I guess I'll take the risks and stay."

"I don't know what you mean," said Marie.

"I mean they'll jaw me for not comin' back to help about the washin'. But now I'm here I might as well die for an ole sheep as a lamb. They'll make a row anyway."

"If your parents need your help, perhaps you had better go," said Marie; "you can come again."

"My parents!" repeated the girl, in fine



scorn. "Them people are not my parents. They only brung me up. My brother and me was both give to them, but my brother run away and I would if I could. I wish I might never see them again. But I don't want to jump out of the fryin' pan into the fire. I've been told I could live like a lady and have fine clothes in some places, but I've got nothin' but myself and I'm goin' to own myself."

The girl relapsed into silence, regarding Marie with a look of fixed determination.

"Would you like to tell me more about yourself and the people you are living with?" asked Marie, sympathetically. "I would like to know why they took you to bring up."

"'Cause my father and mother died when they was sailin' over from Germany, and me and my brother was put into an orphan's home, and them folks got us. They treated us awful. My brother was bigger than me. He used to fight every bad boy that was mean to me, and he hated them people that had us, for they took in washin' and they made him work awful, just as they do me. Finally he told me he was goin' to run away, and when he got big enough



to fight 'em, he'd come back for me. He did come, but they had me tied in the cellar, and told him I was dead, and I never saw him any more.

"When them men was chasin' me las' night I thought of my brother, and wished he was there, but the young man who ran to us when I screamed fit 'em. He knocked 'em right and left. And then to think they shot him! It almost kills me to think of him dyin' for me." And she again fell to weeping.

Marie motioned to me, and I bent over her.

"Ask mamma if I may keep her here," she said.

Mamma's consent was obtained, and Grace never went back to be "slavey at the tub."



## CHAPTER LI.

Mamma accompanied me and my family to New York, where the remains of my husband were interred in the family vault.

Mr. Booth had been sent for, and arrived in time to officiate at William's funeral, held the morning of our departure.

Last rites for the Judge were performed in the church of his choice. The full sense of my desolation came over me when his body was consigned to the tomb; but Gabriel clinging to my skirts, and Bernie weeping by my side, reminded me of my responsibilities for those to whom I was to be as father and mother. I resolved to set them an example of courage more effective than any words I might say. It was only when alone that I yielded to the weight which oppressed me, and cried out for help to bear my burden—but no relief came!

Marie's letter to mamma, who remained with



me some days, indicated how she was strengthened to bear her affliction:

My Dear Mamma:

It is two days since you left, and it seems two years. William has been gone ages and ages.

Oh, how long the time seems since he went; I can not fill it up. Grace has begun to help about my flowers, but does not know how, as William did. The very flowers miss him, I know. He used to raise up the pansies with his finger, so he could look into their smiling faces, and called it chucking them under the chin; but they don't seem to smile any more, and the roses are drooping their heads in sorrow, all excepting the big red one I named for him; that is flourishing and growing more beautiful every day, as I hope William is in heaven. The only comfort is in thinking him happier there than he could be here. At first, I was worried because he had not been baptized, but Mr. Booth says not to worry, but trust his soul to the good Father, who loves him with an everlasting love, and that satisfies me.

Mr. Gale sat with me twice, and talked about



William. He is going to paint a portrait of him for me. Grace never speaks of William without tears coming into her eyes. She thinks him the grandest man that ever lived. Grace is queer. She doesn't believe in anything—that is, hardly anything. She has never been to school, but has been taught to read and write. She read all about William's heroic act, which cost him his life, in the paper, and that is the way she found out he was at our house. She has told the particulars of the tragedy to me many times, and always ends the story with a burst of tears. Then I feel as if I could hug her. She says she is not afraid of anything, and she did not run from her pursuers because she was afraid, but because she was tired washing, and it was easier to run and scream than to fight them. She says her father was a soldier, and her brother and she used to play they were soldiers, and practiced fighting each other for fun. That was the way they both learned to fight, and she thinks if she had not been tied up in the cellar when her brother went back after her, he would have fought those people and taken her away. She says it



is very necessary that orphans should learn to fight. She is very proud of what she calls her washtub muscle, which she has bared her arm to show me. She says it's a mighty handy thing to have. Her conversation reminds me of the way William used to talk when he first came to us. She went to his grave yesterday and strewed it with flowers, and set out some pansies. They will be the first to blossom after the frosts of winter. Oh, it is sad to think of William's body lying under the snow! At times I can scarcely realize that he is really gone. "It is God's will," I keep saying to myself. But no matter how much I say it is God's will, my heart aches just the same.

Don't hurry home, dear mamma; stay and comfort Frank and Bernie. They need you more than I.

Nurse is as good to me as she can be. Grace devotes herself to my comfort, but as Mr. Booth says, no one can ease the pain in my heart except He who put it there; it will be gone when He gives me back my loved ones in a happier world than this. I wish Frank and Bernie could hear Mr. Booth talk. If any one could



console them he could. Give them my love. I know if Mr. Booth were here he would send his love also. Kiss Gabriel a thousand times for me; poor little fatherless boy.

Yours lovingly,

MARIE.

Although Marie's promptly written letter greatly relieved mamma's anxiety concerning her, she did not change her plan to return at an early date. Sometime afterward she wrote me.

"It has transpired that Grace is William's sister. Mr. Gale made the discovery, finding the clue among the belongings William left in the studio. The chain of evidence is complete. Grace herself says she noticed the resemblance of the dead, to the living little brother, from whom she parted years ago. She thinks the beard prevented her from identifying the face she remembered so well. I think you remember her saying that William looked like 'Bill,' as she called her brother. This fact has given her a more devoted friend than ever in Marie, who can not do enough for the sister of the boy she idolized. She has undertaken



to prepare Grace to take her place in the classes she would naturally be expected to occupy, for she is too proud to enter the primary department, which would be suited to her attainments. Her ambition to acquire knowledge is wonderful and promises well for her future. The worst feature in the girl's character is her pugilistic tendency; not that she has actually attacked any one, but when displeased with a person, she will say, 'I would like to hit him.'

"Although her associations have always been low, she has an innate sense of propriety, and dignity, such as enabled William to rise above his position. Mr. Gale thinks, from what he has learned, that the brother and sister are the lineal descendants of a German baron of the same name as William. He intends to pursue his investigation and learn what he can of their ancestry. Grace wears the fine gowns which Bernie laid aside for mourning with the air of a duchess, and it is a question whether Mr. Gale is paying attention to the gown or to the girl. Perhaps Bernie could throw some light on the subject."



Bernie tossed her head and grimaced mischievously when I read her the foregoing sentence. With the elasticity of youth she was already recovering her spirits.



## CHAPTER LII.

It was a late autumn evening, after my great loss. Winds, cold and bleak, were blowing without and grates glowing within. Bernie and I sat by our fireside, and watched little Gabriel amusing himself with his puppy and playthings.

"Mamma, I shall go crazy if I have to stay here shut up in this dismal house all winter. I don't want to go into society so soon after all our trouble, but I do want a change!"

"You know, my dear, I must be here a part of the time, at least, to attend to important matters connected with the settlement of your papa's estate."

"Yes, I know. But you could take Gabriel and me to your mamma's and come back whenever necessary. You know, she said in her last letter, we must come; she would not take no for an answer. She and Marie are so



lonely without us, and we miss them so dreadfully."

I made no answer. Bernie appealed to Gabriel. "Gabie, come and coax mamma to take us to Grandmamma Adams. Now, show yourself a good little lawyer, and win your case!"

Gabriel, although apparently absorbed in play, had kept his ears open, as he always did, to our conversation. He had often before been called upon to lead at an imaginary bar, under his papa's training, so readily responded. Releasing his puppy from the shafts of his toy cart, and driving it to its stable under the sofa, he approached the feminine judge, on whom the decision of his case depended, with the air of one sure of his points. He fixed his intelligent eyes upon the judge, with a side glance at Bernie.

"My sister Bernie is lonesome." Bernie nodded assent. "She hasn't any puppy to play with." Bernie smiled approval. "If she should go to dranmamma's she might find a puppy to play with."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Bernie, clapping her hands.



"Silence in the court," commanded the judge. "I want to hear your attorney's plea. Go on, Gabriel!"

"Dranmamma is lonesome, Aunt Mawee is lonesome, Mr. Booth is lonesome, Mr. Dale is lonesome, that new dirl is lonesome—and—and—we ought not to let them all be lonesome for us. They are peoples and we are peoples, and peoples ought to be good to each other and visit together. Dranmamma was here last and she told me it was our turn to do there. They might cry if we don't come. And they might get sick and die. Do you want your mamma to die and never see her any more?" The judge motioned the little pleader to continue. "I want to see Mr. Booth—I want to see him the worstest I ever wanted to see anybody, and I'll div my puppy if you'll take us."

The case here rested. After the judge had signified that she could not be corrupted by the offer of the pet, she took the matter under advisement, to be decided at an early day.

I sat that night, long after the children had retired, debating the question, when a hand



seemed to be laid upon my shoulder and a voice said "Go."

Startled, I glanced quickly around, almost expecting to see Judge Bennett. I was sure it was his voice that spoke and his familiar touch I felt, but the flickering shadows on the walls and furniture were all I saw. I wondered if it were possible I could have fallen asleep and thus dreamed of the "stilled voice and vanished hand." The dream, if such it were, decided me; and thus the young attorney gained his victory. Decision was therefore rendered that we remove, for a season, to Grandmamma Adams', and the week before Thanksgiving was set for departure.

Preparations for the change began immediately. I found the knowledge I had gained of law, of great advantage to me in the settlement of our affairs. I took my husband's place, so far as possible, in the firm, being the silent partner. The training and education of my son, the chaperoning of Bernice, were now my duties. I looked forward to the time when I would be at liberty to engage more actively in my chosen profession.



My fondest hopes were centered in my son and the castles I built for him reached the sky. He was not easily governed, but love was a powerful factor in keeping him under control. He had never said his prayers since the time he said them for Marie, and I, for very shame on account of my own dereliction in that respect, had ceased to importune him. Realizing that the fault—if such it were—was mine and the child was not responsible, I had no blame for him, and perhaps, loved him the more for his inherited obstinacy.

For Bernie also, I felt the keenest solicitude. She was a bundle of contradictions; either madly hilarious, or proportionately despondent. Although sincerely mourning for her father, she soon pined for a broader field in which to indulge her merriment.

When she learned of the proposed visit to my mother, she signified her delight by turning boarding-school somersaults the entire length of the room, jumping over every chair in her way, and engaging in other unseemly absurdities. "Now," throwing herself breathless upon the lounge, "I must spend my time



until we go, planning to give your mamma's family pleasant surprises."

"I shall 'sprise Mr. Booth," echoed Gabriel, who was at my heels.

"O, yes; and so shall I," said Bernie. "I know how I'll surprise the Angel."



## CHAPTER LIII.

Our old physician, Dr. Jones, whose friendly and professional visits dated back to the day of my birth, was the first to call upon me in my mother's home. He had been talking with mamma when I was summoned into his presence. It was always pleasant for me to meet this wise and wary friend, for he had intrenched himself in my confidence by never alluding to the event in my life, the secret of which he knew I jealously guarded. On the occasion of my husband's sudden and mysterious death, he had considerably refrained from questioning me as to the cause. In his interview with mamma, he had returned the peculiar stone she had loaned him for examination, and now appealed to me for further detail.

"Your mamma has just told me," said he, "that you have not yet seen the stone that Bernice associates with the death of her papa." I was about to reply when our inter-



view was suddenly terminated by a messenger for the doctor.

"Come with me," said mamma, gathering up the package from her lap; "I want to show you this." In her room, she locked the door. When she removed the paper wrapping from the curious thing, I saw an oblong stone, several inches in length, at one end of which was an almost perfectly formed tiny human head. Below the head, which was bent face downward, the stone presented the appearance of a jumbled mass of fibrous things, pressed into a solid lump. "It seems to be a fossilized embryo with a head like a human pigmy," I said.

"Dr. Jones said it might be a petrification," answered mamma, "and very likely it is. I will tell you why. When you were a babe, and I was in need of a nurse, one came highly recommended by a Mrs. Bennett, of New York, who was well known to a friend of mine. I engaged her, and although she had never nursed before gave entire satisfaction. She was exceedingly fond of you, and often said she could not love a baby of her own better. But for some unknown reason, she suddenly



left my service. Before leaving she planted the rose-bush under her bed-room window, with her own hands, and begged me to let it remain as a token of her love for you. From the roots of this bush, Gabriel dug this fossil. The nurse said, 'Tell Baby Frank, when she is old enough to understand, about my love for her, of which the bush is a token.' "

While mamma was telling her story, I was studying the fossil, and as I traced the tiny features of the drooping face, from the Laureola brow to the queer little grinning mouth, cold chills crept over me. Mamma added, "It may be a freak of nature, and I hope it is, but strangely enough, I never saw the girl again. I have a horror of the stone. What shall we do with the dreadful thing?"

"Let us bury it under the rose-bush," and together we went out and covered it forever from our sight. Mamma went into the house, while I lingered among the shrubbery, congratulating myself that she was unacquainted with the various episodes in Madam Laureola's life, so well known to me. Around the corner of the house, hidden from view I heard Bernie



and Mr. Booth in conversation. Said Bernie, "I never go around that corner now, for that hateful bush is there, under which I found the stone that killed papa."

"How could taking a stone in his hand kill him?" questioned Mr. Booth.

"I don't know," replied Bernie, "but it did. He was sitting in his chair, in perfect health, reading the paper, and I gave him the stone. He turned it over in his hand several times, examined it, turned pale, rolled his eyes and began to gasp for breath, and died."

Bernie's voice choked. After a moment Mr. Booth asked what became of the stone. "Dr. Jones has it. He assured me it could not possibly have killed papa, but I know it did, for I was there, and if the doctor had been there he would have seen for himself."

I heard no reply to Bernie's assertions. "You didn't know papa very well, did you, Mr. Booth?"

"Our acquaintance was very slight."

"Well, he was one of the best men than ever lived. Not in a praying way, you know, but in a generous way. The only selfish thing I



ever knew of his doing was to let Mamma Frank promise him she would not marry again if he should die. He had married her after my own mamma died; he didn't seem to think of that. I happened to overhear what they said, and Mamma Frank promised she would never marry another. I'm glad of it, of course, but it did look a little selfish in papa to exact such a promise. Don't you think so, Mr. Booth?"

His answer was unintelligible to me, and they moved away.



## CHAPTER LIV.

Marie said to me a few days before Thanksgiving, "I hate to think of all the poor people that won't have any turkey, when we are having a big fat one; don't you, Frank?"

Having a suspicion my good sister was about to propose missionary work distasteful to me, I answered warily. "Of course, it is not pleasant to think of people too poor to dine on turkey, but let us not make ourselves uncomfortable thinking of them; let us rather contemplate our own blessings with thankful hearts."

"I want more people to have thankful hearts beside those who go to church and eat turkey, and how can they if they are hungry? Frank, I can't eat when I think about people starving. I'm made so and I can't help it."

"It's unfortunate that you are made so, Marie, for you can not feed all the hungry people in the world, and there are always some starving."



"I know, Frank, Jesus Christ said, 'the poor ye have always with you.' Now, I want to do what I can for the poor on Thanksgiving Day. I know I can not feed them all, but I can do my share toward providing for them, and I so much wish your help. Mamma is too busy to attend to it."

"What do you want me to do, Marie?"

"Just what Mr. Booth advises. He can plan much better than I, and knows how to stretch money like india-rubber. A dollar in his hand is as good as two in mine. I have given all mamma would permit out of my allowance. Mr. Booth wants to get up a free church dinner and invite every one to come, instead of having dinner at their homes, but mamma and others object. He is trying to solve the problem of dinner or no dinner for the poor. I told him I would ask you about it. He said your advice would be valuable."

Marie had scarcely ceased speaking when Mr. Booth came into the room. "Speak of angels and you hear the flutter of their wings," was Marie's informal greeting. "I was just telling



Frank you said her advice would be valuable, and I'm glad you are both here."

Mr. Booth and myself exchanged inquiring glances. It was the first opportunity for anything more than the merest civilities, that had occurred since my return. His attention had been largely bestowed upon Gabriel and Bernie, to the exclusion of their mamma. But now having been driven to close quarters, he manfully faced the situation. "Will you kindly favor me with your advice, Mrs. Bennett?"

"You may say 'Frank,' if you please, Mr. Booth. I prefer my old friends to call me by the name most familiar to them," I said with a slight show of embarrassment.

He looked relieved. "Thank you!"

"Now what do you advise," asked Marie, looking from one to the other. "Do you advise a dinner?"

Her pastor and sister stared at each other. A touch of the spirit of directness, so prominent in Marie, before her affliction, manifested itself. "Are you two people always going to act queer together?" said she. I blushed as a girl, and the color rose quickly in Mr.



Booth's face. "If you are going to give advice, Frank, I wish you would do it," continued the unmerciful prodder.

"I don't understand the situation well enough to give advice," I answered.

Mr. Booth proceeded to explain. It seemed his purse was not as large as his heart, else would he have every poor family in the city thankful for a good dinner Thanksgiving Day.

It was soon settled that there was not time to accomplish the desired object, and so we must content ourselves with donating dinners in a small way to those whom Mr. Booth had selected as most needy. It was also settled that I act as commissariat in ordering the provisions and seeing they were properly distributed.

The work was entirely new to me, and I was in my carriage early and late, until my duties were accomplished. In driving about among the poor, I was surprised to find so much actual suffering. I realized more fully than ever there must be great wrong somewhere to make these conditions possible. My studies in political economy were meager, but I had often heard the theory advanced that



extreme poverty was largely owing to indolence and thriftlessness, and in a general way, I had accepted this opinion. Now I began to entertain doubts as to the correctness of the theory. I appealed to Mr. Booth for a solution of the problem.

In effect, he said that nearly all misery and poverty resulted from non-observance of the religion of Jesus Christ, and will never be done away with until the spirit of his teachings are followed. Observance of the golden rule alone would make a paradise of this world. To love one's neighbor as one's self is not an impossibility. Some few have attained that nearness to perfection. I believe Count Tolstoi is one of them. Marie is a long way on the road to it. Other choice spirits have approached it, as may be seen by their loving self-sacrifice. "In the truth that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, lies the hope of the world," he concluded with encouraging emphasis.



## CHAPTER LV.

A note was handed me on the afternoon before Thanksgiving Day. It read:  
most kindest leddy

we uns is pore to we aint got no turky nor  
nothin fer thanksgivin da My ole man is sic  
an i kent du muc washin fer the gal we hed to  
help has runed awa we uns is in bad luk drefful  
bad luk an we peel to yu fer help if yu ken  
gin we anythin we wil be drefful bliged we  
live to 120 shady ally

sally Long

I was in Marie's room, holding a consultation with Mr. Booth, when I received the communication, and as I read it aloud, mamma came in. She stopped to listen. "I told you so," she said, as I finished and gazed blankly around for sympathy. "I told you, you would be beset by worthless beggars, if you did this thing. And now you see I was not mistaken."

Mr. Booth looked distressed. He seemed to



think mamma's remarks were a reflection upon him for the part he had taken in prompting her daughters to what she considered foolish experiments.

"I will find out for myself how needy they are, as they are not Mr. Booth's beneficiaries," I said. "I can not turn a deaf ear to this affecting 'peel,' mamma."

The pained expression left Mr. Booth's face as if by magic. In fact, it cleared up so beautifully that I felt repaid for all I had done, or intended to do for his sake. His approval, as of old, I began to desire above all else. Was I turning to him for comfort in my sorrow?

An hour later found my carriage drawn up in front of 120 Shady Alley, and a frowsy woman stood beside it. It was Sally Long. She repeated the story told with her pen, adding such embellishments as a ready tongue may make. She directed my attention as a proof of her veracity to her battered washtubs, toppling like tipsy tramps on three-legged stools, in front of her humble abode. The door was open.

"The ole man is abed in t'other end of the



room. He tuk sick a week ago. He s most discouraged 'cause he cant git work and I cant git washin' enough to buy his medicine. Grace she runed away. She was a mighty handy gal. She could wash powerful an' fight like a boy.

"She larnt it of her brother Bill but he runed away years afore she did. Them brats was ongrateful. I tuk 'em in from the orphan's hum an' when they got big enough to yearn their own livin' fust one lit out and then t'other."

It occurred to me to inquire further concerning the antecedents of the children who I became satisfied were none other than Marie's proteges, William and Grace.

"They was two little Dutch brats what couldn't speak a word of Inglish when I tuk 'em. Their father and mother was both drowned when they was coming on the ocean to America. The ship was sunk, I reckon, an' there want no way of findin' out who the young 'uns belonged to. But they gin me the clothes they had on when they was brung there an' I kep the Dutchy little duds fer curiosities. They was kinder nice too."



"You shall have a good turkey dinner to-morrow, if you will give me those clothes."

"It's a bargain," said the woman, promptly, and she did not wait to be paid in advance, but trusting to my honor, laid her long treasured bundle in the carriage, at my feet. I took them to Mr. Gale's studio, with the intention of leaving the relics which might prove of assistance to him in the search for William's relatives, and also to insure them from recognition by Grace, until such time as might suit our purpose. Quietly entering, the reception room was vacant, and I proceeded to the adjoining studio. I knocked gently, and presuming on our long established friendship, opened the door at the same moment. There was Mr. Gale at his easel, and there was Grace posing before him. She was dressed in the identical rags and tatters, in which she appeared on the morning I first saw her, standing by William's bier.

I stood transfixed with amazement. Mr. Gale arose and bowed, brush in hand. He was evidently embarrassed, but did not lose his presence of mind.



"Shall we go to the reception room?" he asked. And turning to Grace, "Will you please wait for me; I have not quite done with you?"

Mr. Gale closed the door upon his model and mutual explanations and apologies followed. It seemed the artist was anxious to transfer to canvass the impression which Grace's appearance had made upon him as she bent tearfully over the, to her, dead stranger, and said, "He died for me!" Hence the secret posing, known only to the unsophisticated Marie.

The package was opened, and the infant's garments it contained were marked in such a manner as to establish the relationship of William and Grace to the German baron. Grace was at length invited to take part in the conference, and she testified to what Sally Long had told her on the subject. "This cap," she said, "was Bill's. Old Mother Long told me so; and this hood was mine. There's our names on the skirts and things. The old woman said she didn't doubt that we was quality babies, for our clothes showed it. But she said she'd prove that quality folks could work if they had to, and she just put us through. She never



showed the bundle to Bill, but she showed it to me many a time after he run away. I knew it the minute I saw it in Mrs. Bennett's hands. I knew where that yellow old bundle came from very well. I suppose she made you pay big for it, Mrs. Bennett; she said she'd never let it go for a song."

"She let it go for a Thanksgiving dinner, Grace; and the poor thing needed it badly."

"Well, I never! Did you give them a dinner? And everything they ever give me for all my slaving was old rags like I've got on. Just see this toggery, and then look at them things. If it aint scandalizing! Aint it scandalizing the way things is in this world anyway? I shall go there some day, dressed in my best, and tell 'em this world has some good folks in it."

We did not reply. Mr. Gale was absorbed in the study of a dainty lace trimmed bib. He was obliged to defer his work on the picture, and Grace, covered with an ulster, returned with me in the carriage.



## CHAPTER LVI.

Shady Alley was my destination when starting out next day. Statements made by Sally Long concerning her struggles with poverty on my former visit, had interested me. Her side of life was new to me.

It was afternoon, and Sally Long was energetically emptying her tubs, having finished her washing, which appeared like inverted dancers along the wind-blown lines. Seeing me, she flew to the carriage. I accepted her invitation to "get out and come in."

"We uns is all upset for I cant rid things 'til I git through washin'."

We entered the dismal abode, Sally drawing forth a wooden chair and dusting it with her apron. Sweat and steam were still on her corrugated brow, and her apron was again called into requisition to remove it. She seated herself on the edge of the bed where her husband lay apparently fast asleep, but the suspicious



contraction of the shaggy eyebrows was observable as his spry little spouse planted herself at his feet. She swung her feet several inches clear of the floor, causing the rickety structure to vibrate while she balanced herself by grasping the post at her right. A scraggy lop-eared dog lay across the foot of the bed. Our conversation had scarcely begun, when there was a perceptible quiver of the man's lids, and a sharp eye for an instant turned on me. Sally saw the squint and hastened to reassure me.

"Ha aint awake. He allers sleeps with one eye open. He combinated the habit when he was watchman at the mill. He could fix hisself fer a nap with his side to where the boss would come, and set that er eye of hisn so it would shine on him any time of night. I told him it wasn't fair, but he said there was lots of things that wasn't fair; it wasn't fair he should watch all night for a shilling, and it wasn't nuther, and I knowed it. We poor folkse know we aint treated fair. If we was we could buy our own turkies. We uns aint paid nothing to speak of, for our work, and we can't git it half the time to do. When we tuk them



children to bring up, he was workin' in the mill. We calculated the boy could help him when he was big 'nough, and the gal could help me wash; but he lost his place in the mill when he got hurt, and we had to grind them young 'uns. Fust one run away and then t'other lit out, but we 'uns aint got nowhere to run to when we is grinded. Grace said, when she came here, all dressed up, that she wasn't grinded no more, and I'm glad of it!"

"She's in good shape to light the fire, boss!" murmured the head on the pillow.

"He's dreamin' he's in the mill. He's always talkin' to the boss in his sleep," said Sally, with indifference.

I embraced the opportunity afforded by the interruption, to further question the woman concerning the children. "Oh, yes. They was two sharp 'uns—was them young 'uns. They was up to every kind of diviltry. Bill teached Grace to fight, and she fit like a tartar. They practiced on each other and went around with bloody noses half the time. I've seen 'em lock arms and walk off lovin' like with their faces all scratched and smutty from rastling



in the dirt together. There wasn't a boy in the alley that dast hist a chip or raise his thumb to his nose at 'em. They was awful lovin' when they wasn't fightin'. When Bill run away Grace most cried her eyes out; and the fellers in the alley began to pick on her. But she soon showed 'em she was dangerous. I've seed her draw off and fist'cuff the biggest of 'em. When Bill come back to see her, I had her tied up in the cellar fer fightin'. Me an' the ole man had a hard tussle to wear her out an' git her gagged and roped for she fit powerful. I hed to tell Bill she was dead fer I was afeard if I told him the truth he would manage to murder us. He was awful savage when his dander was up. When he wasn't more'n knee high to a grasshopper, he bragged what he'd do to anybody that touched Grace. Fact mum."

The head on the pillow was suddenly lifted with both eyes open. "He's awake," said Sally, sliding from her perch to the floor with a jarring thud.

"Derned ef I aint," was the rough reply. "Hev ye got my gruel ready?"

"There aint no meal, and I've got to get the



pay fer to-day's washin' before I ken git any," said she, waddling away from the bed. The head dropped back, and uttered blood-curdling imprecations against those whom he called the robbers of the poor. His maledictions so shocked me that I immediately arose to go. I was followed out by the active little woman from whose shoulders her husband's curses rolled unheeded. "He allers curses when the meal has gin out, fer he lives mostly on gruel, though he stuffed hissself with turkey yisteday, an' I thought that would last him 'till I got the meal; so I gin the leavin's of the dinner to the folkses in the alley. If I hadn't they'd have throwed mud on our winders and hectered us awful. I tell you there's nothing like hectering folks to make 'em share with you. My ole man says there'll be such a hecterin' time as the world has never knowed, ef grindin' of the poor keeps on."

In parting with Sally Long, I promised to send her the meal she needed.



## CHAPTER LVII.

Having returned from abroad, Miss Gay surprised our assembled family by walking into the parlor Christmas eve. "The spirit said to me, 'go,' and forthwith I sailed for my native land," she cheerily explained. "I knew I would be welcome."

"Welcome?" echoed a chorus of voices; "of course you are welcome!"

"None could be more welcome," said mamma, embracing her. Marie burst into a flood of tears when it came her turn to take Miss Gay's hand and receive her kiss. "William is not here to welcome you," she sobbed.

"How does thee know William is not here," answered Miss Gay. "How does thee know his happy spirit is not with us, bearing blessings from the good Father?"

"I wish I knew," said Marie.

"Thee may know it to thy satisfaction, if thee will consider that the spirit, when disem-



bodied, does not change, and would naturally continue to seek the society of those it loved while in the body. I think it reasonable to believe that our loved ones, whose presence we desire, are here. Let us be glad and rejoice with them to-night that their Redeemer and ours liveth. To-morrow we will celebrate His appearance upon the earth, as the babe of Bethlehem and the Savior of the world. Let us sing the song the angels sang, 'Peace on earth; good will to men.' "

She turned to me. "I know thee will play and sing it with us; sing it for the Judge. He knows more about it now than he did before he entered the new life."

Thus tenderly exhorted, I went to the piano and sang "Gloria in Excelsis." Upon my shoulder the gentle pressure of a hand caused me to look around, as the last notes of the chant died away. No one was near enough to touch me, and I was not surprised, I had so often experienced the same sensation.

The sound of music had reached Mr. Booth's study and attracted him to the parlor, shadowed as usual by his little namesake.



Conversation naturally turned to Miss Gay's experiences abroad. She had much of interest to relate. We were all taken by surprise when she turned to Mr. Gale, saying, "By the way, while in Germany I chanced to meet Baron von Heidleburg, who informed me he was in correspondence with you concerning the relationship to him of two children, supposed to have been lost at sea. I assured him he might depend upon the correctness of the information you had given. He had about decided to send a relative to investigate more fully; for William would be his heir, could his identity be established."

"We have had further correspondence since your interview," replied Mr. Gale, "and he knows William is dead and Grace living. I received a letter from him saying he would send for Grace."

"This is indeed wonderful," said Miss Gay. "Where is Grace? I would like to see William's sister—the heiress of a baron's great wealth."

Bernie glanced furtively at Mr. Gale, while mamma replied, "Grace has gone to sit with



her foster-father, who is very sick, and too poor to have a paid nurse. Her foster-mother washes for a living, and can not watch nights."

Mr. Gale fidgeted in his chair and looked at mamma. "Is the man dangerously ill?"

"Yes," said mamma.

"Will she be alone with him?"

"I don't know, Mr. Gale. I presume there are neighbors she can call. You know Grace is not timid."

Mr. Gale made no reply, but soon after slipped quietly from the room.

In the course of an hour he returned and announced that he had brought Grace home, having found the man breathing his last, and in no further need of her services.

"It is not a fit place for her to stay all night," said he.

Mr. Booth immediately arose. "I must go to them."

"No, no, Brother Booth, you are not wanted," responded Mr. Gale. "They said 'they didn't want no drivlin preacher around thar what didn't care whether they lived or died of starvation.'"



"I'm going," answered Mr. Booth, decidedly, "and Brother Gale, I would not object to your accompanying me."

"How very brotherly they are all at once," said Bernie aside to me. "I wonder what it all means."

After further parleying, Mr. Gale decided, with an eye on Bernie, to remain with us, and Mr. Booth went alone to the afflicted. Soon after he left, we retired to our rooms. As Bernie's apartment joined mine, I was not surprised to see her appear robed for the night.

"Mamma, what do you suppose possesses Mr. Gale to run after Grace the way he does? Is it her prospective fortune or herself that is the attraction?"

"In my opinion, neither, Bernie. His affection for William was so sincere, he feels in duty bound to do what he can for William's sister. With Marie the feeling is the same, or rather it is accentuated from the fact that William especially commended Grace to her care."



## CHAPTER LVIII.

The novel sensation of being the recipient of a variety of beautiful Christmas gifts had been experienced by Grace. While delightedly displaying them to Marie, a visitor was announced for "Miss von Heidleburg." She did not take the trouble to decipher the name upon the card, saying carelessly, as she started to the parlor, "It's likely some one to see me about Long's funeral; he is to be buried to-day."

She soon returned in high dudgeon. Her hair was disheveled and her general appearance that of one who had engaged in a tussle. "The rascal insulted me," she explained, in breathless gasps; "he was an awful smart looking chap and all dressed up to kill, too."

"What did he do?" asked Marie, with an expression of horror in her innocent eyes.

"What did he do?" repeated Grace. "Why, he tried to kiss me. He couldn't talk Amer-



ican worth a cent. He's a foreigner, and I couldn't understand a word he said. But he spoke my name, and I nodded and said 'yes,' and then he said something and was going to kiss me, and I drew off and hit him right between the eyes. I tell you we had a time of it. He undertook to hold my hands so I couldn't hit him any more, but he couldn't do it. His grip was powerful, I tell you, so I wriggled away and threw the big music book at him, and he backed up against the music stool and fell over it, and he and the stool and the music was all in a heap together. Then I opened the door and told him to git, and he sneaked out glaring at me like a wolf."

"He may be one of your relatives from Germany," suggested Marie.

Grace was dumfounded. This supposition had not occurred to her.

Although the exciting events of the morning had a depressing effect upon Grace, she nerved herself to attend her foster-father's funeral in the afternoon. She went in the family carriage, accompanied by Mr. Booth, who conducted the services, which she declared to



Marie, were "heavenly." Marie was delighted with Grace's praise of her beloved pastor.

"I think he is an angel," she continued; "and Sally Long thinks he is, too. He never said a word about old Long's cussin' and swearin' and comforted Sally by telling her that he hoped she would meet him in heaven, and I believe she will."

"What makes you think so?" asked Marie interestedly.

"Because old Long was kind to the cat that was kicked around and pestered by every boy in the alley, and I believe that would take him to heaven if nothing else would. Bill brung it home in his pocket when it was a kitten. He found it most starved to death, mewing on a tree box, and he gave it part of his broth every day, but when Bill ran away all the boys picked at it. They das'ent before that. Sally Long was mean to it, too. She tried to set Mordica on it, but Mordica just curled up at old Long's feet, where he staid day and night, and wouldn't budge."

"Who is Mordica?" said Marie.

"The dog, of course! We call him Mord for



short. Poor Mord! He set to the head of the coffin beside Sally, with his lop-ear loppiner than ever, and his tail curled under him. He had a black ribbon tied around his neck in a big bow. Sally wanted me to set with the mourners, and I should if I had been dressed in black, but how would I look there in blue and gold? After hearing that sermon I was glad I went to see 'em," she added.

"Were there many mourners?" inquired Marie.

"Only Sally Long and Mord," was the reply. "But Sally looked mighty scrumptious, for she had borried her mourning of a widder who is some quality, for her husband used to keep a sody stand, when he was living, and he died just in the nick of time for Sally to borry his widder's mourning. But Sally didn't seem to mourn so dredfully much, after all. Mord seemed to feel the worst, for he whined every little while. Sally was awfully set up about the funeral, and the corpse. When I got there but few had come, and she was standing by the coffin with her hands on her hips, and she turns to me and says, 'He looks tip-top,



don't he?' He was laid out with one of his eyes open, for Sally said he wouldn't look natural with both eyes shut, 'cause he never slept that way. She wanted him to look as if he was watching for the boss at the mill. She said the only comfort in her affliction was that she could have a quality funeral."

"A poor comfort, surely," said Marie, with a sigh.

"It's enough for Sally Long," said Grace.

"I'm glad William rescued the poor kitten, and Mr. Long was good to it; but, Grace, you don't think such acts win heaven for people, do you?"

"I reckon they do; I'd rather depend on them than on joining the church."

"We should do both," said Marie, "and we will, if we love God."

Grace made no answer, but turned her face to the window and looked out.

I had been an interested listener, and was about to ask for further information, when Grace suddenly sprang to her feet. "Good gracious! If there ain't the very man I fit this



morning coming through the gate with Mr. Gale. What shall I do?"

"Sit down and compose yourself," I replied. "The man is a cousin of yours from Germany. His name is William von Heidleburg. Mr. Gale suspected as much, and looked him up while you were at the funeral, and learned the particulars of his call upon you. He has accepted an invitation from mamma to dine, and you are expected to be present."

"I can't do it!" said Grace, shamefacedly. "I can't face that man. I'll eat with Marie, as I always do."

"The position you will hereafter occupy in mamma's household will make it imperative for you to take your meals with the family," was my decided answer.

"I'd rather go back to Sally Long's than to go through with all you want me to, for I know Bernie will make fun of me," said Grace, with tears in her eyes.

"Grace," said Marie, gently, "you are the granddaughter of a German baron; you are heiress to a large fortune; your cousin told Mr. Gale all about it. We are very glad of



your good luck, and no one will make fun of you. Your cousin will overlook what occurred between you after what Mr. Gale has told him. I advise you to go to dinner and act as if nothing had happened."

"I wish I could," said Grace, somewhat mollified, "but just think of the way I lit into that man, and he my cousin, too!"

Marie smiled. "Don't think anything about it; take off your bonnet and go with Sister Frank to dinner."

Grace creditably passed through the trying ordeal of a formal introduction to her relative, and they became friends through mutual explanations, made by him in broken English, and by her in broken grammar. No allusion was made to the crimson scratch on the young man's cheek, or to the bluish swelling between the eyes. But the color rose high in the mortified girl's face at the sight of an accusing court plaster on the end of his forefinger, into which she remembered setting her teeth.

Mr. von Heidleburg sat between Grace and Bernie; the latter could talk with him in his native tongue, and he occasionally addressed



her in German. I caught enough of what he said to know that he was paying her delicate, but not distasteful compliments. Mr. Booth was seated on the other side of Grace, and knowing the situation, devoted himself to making her feel at home in her new position. Miss Gay sat at Mr. Gale's left, opposite the young people, and I heard her rallying the artist on his want of appetite and seeming abstraction. He made no denial until she said, "Thee must be ill," to which he replied, looking reproachfully at Bernie, "I'm not ill, but somehow I am not hungry."

Just then the plum pudding was brought to the table, in a lake of blazing brandy. Little blue flames licked the sides of the platter covering the rich mass, and when served, burst forth from the morsels on every plate.

"Couldn't you eat a little of Dranmamma's hell pudding," said Gabriel with sweet solicitude, having heard Mr. Gale's admission.

Mr. Gale stared at the child in amazement, but, innocent of having said anything unusual, he repeated his question.



"What makes you call the pudding such a name as that?" asked Mr. Gale.

"Cause it's afire. My Sunday-school teacher says everything is afire there. I like hell pudding; don't you, Mr. Gale?"

A silvery little laugh from Bernie caused Mr. Gale to pause in his answer, but as he saw her conscious blush under the adoring gaze of her new admirer, he said decidedly, "No, I don't like that kind of pudding."



## CHAPTER LIX.

Bernie, elated by the favorable impression made upon Grace's cousin, seizing the first opportunity, imparted her triumph to me. It was after he left for his hotel on Christmas evening, and I was in my room. "Mamma, is not Mr. von Heidleburg splendid? I really envy Grace. He said he wished I was his cousin. When I asked him how long he would remain, he said he would like to stay forever, and he looked unutterable things."

"What reply did you make, Bernie?"

"I told him I wished so, too."

My eyes opened wide. "Oh, I knew you would be shocked, mamma, but that wasn't a circumstance to the nice things we said to each other. We just kept it up until the last minute, and then he said, 'good-bye for a night;' so he intends to see me to-morrow."

"Of course, he will come to see his cousin



Grace, and you should give them an opportunity to become acquainted, Bernie."

"Why, Grace has fought him literally with tooth and nail, just because he offered her a cousinly caress. Do you suppose he craves further acquaintance?"

"Whether he craves it or not, they must be encouraged to know each other better, and it would be kind of you to promote a better understanding between them."

"Oh, certainly, I will do that; but, please don't object to his bestowing a share of his gallantry upon me. I delight in it. If Old Sobersides would say half as many sweet things to me as Young Germany did, I would be perfectly happy. He glares upon me like a wolf every time I speak to a man and I'm tired of it. It makes me contrary to see his eyes glinting at me when I'm having a good time. I just act worse than ever and say lots of things I wouldn't say if he didn't act so."

"Why should you care, Bernie, how Mr. Gale acts, and why would you be perfectly happy if he said sweet things to you?"

Bernie blushed. "Oh, I don't know! There



are things people can't explain. Why should he care what I do? Explain that, if you can!"

The silence maintained had a discouraging effect upon her. She tilted back in her chair and listlessly hummed a tune. Suddenly she straightened up. "Mamma, Mr. von Heidleburg told me a strange story about a man who came over on the same ship. The man lives in this city and owns a chair hundreds of years old, and the First Owner of the chair, who died centuries ago, comes and sits in it awhile every night, and talks to him. What do you think of that?"

"I think I would like to possess the chair, Bernie."

"I think the man is crazy, mamma. The next thing we hear he will be in an insane asylum. Mr. von Heidleburg didn't seem to question his sanity. He is going to see the chair while here, and will tell me more about it, after he has visited the man who has it."

"When did he tell you this story?"

"After dinner, when you were all talking on other subjects; if you had listened you might have heard it. It was very interesting. We



were in the corner by the piano, just before I played. He didn't care about my playing; he said he would prefer I talk to him. I assure you, mamma, he was bound to make an impression on an American girl, and he succeeded. I'm almost in love with him."

"You are too impressible, Bernie."

"O, no, mamma; it doesn't hurt me to get almost in love with every nice young man I meet. What hurts is to lose my heart entirely."

"That should be bliss," I said.

"True, it should be, but it is not always," replied Bernie in a plaintive tone.

I scarcely noticed Bernie's answer. I was considering the feasibility of securing an interview with Turner, who I inferred had returned. Bernie noticed my abstraction and arose to go.

"It is late, and I am keeping you up," she said as she kissed me good-night.

Pleasant experiences of the day had not banished from my mind its all-pervading bitterness. At times the silence between my lost love and myself seemed unendurable. After



Bernie left me, I was seized with a frenzied desire to speak to him. I had watched eagerly for Turner's return, hoping, through him, to communicate with the First Owner, and thus be able to send a message to my husband, and possibly to hear from him in return. On the impulse of the moment I hastily put on bonnet and wrap and started out with a view of going to Turner's. Drawing near I saw by the light in the uncurtained window that Turner was at home and sitting in front of the antique chair apparently in conversation with the First Owner. He gave me a hearty greeting, and it was not long before I was asking questions and receiving answers through my willing host. He could give me no information of my husband except that the last time he saw him he was "under instruction in great truths which he had neglected while in the flesh and which were necessary to his highest development."

I was bitterly disappointed, and for a moment experienced a touch of resentment that it should be deemed necessary to further enlighten the Judge who I was aware thor-



oughly understood the doctrines of the church in which he had been educated. But time was precious, as the midnight hour was drawing on when the First Owner would take his departure, and, in desperation, I cried out, "Is there no way in which I can be put in communication with the spirit of my husband this night?"

Turner suddenly became strangely excited. "Judge Bennett is 'ere. The First 'Honer' says Judge Bennett is 'ere. 'E his by your side; 'is 'and his hon your shoulder."

The sudden announcement had a paralyzing effect upon me, and in a dazed way I glanced around for a view of the beloved object which, of course, was not to be seen. But the sensation of a hand upon my shoulder which I had felt before, was distinctly experienced. This seemed to reassure me, and I believed the spirit of the Judge was present. I made an effort to control myself and say the things to him I had so often longed to say. But how could I do this through a common creature like Turner! I was too proud to make an exhibition of my most sacred feelings in his pres-



ence. Could I only obtain possession of the chair once more and have direct communication with the First Owner, it would be easier to speak through him to my husband. I turned suddenly to Turner.

"I will pay you your own price for the chair if you will sell it to me."

The Englishman shook his head.

"Hit's hall the comfort I 'ave," said he, and added with a happy twinkle of the eye, "The First 'Honer' is 'elping me to 'eaven,' e be."

I was disheartened. It lacked but a moment of the hour when the First Owner would be called away, and I could fix upon nothing I was willing to say through the distasteful medium confronting me. Suddenly it occurred to me to make an appointment for the following night, when I would be better prepared for an interview which it was evident must, in the nature of the case, be somewhat formal between my husband and myself. This was accomplished, although I was informed that it was not certain the Judge could be present, as he was not yet master of his own



actions. But, as "law governed" my earnest desire, would probably enable him to meet me.

No sooner was this arrangement made than Turner informed me the First "Honer" had disappeared in the white flame.



## CHAPTER LX.

Night was drawing on, when I was to have an interview with the departed spirit of my husband. The thought that Turner was to be the medium through whom I was to send and receive greetings filled me with dismay. I felt it sacrilege to attempt to express our innermost feelings to each other, as had been our wont when he was in the flesh.

A love letter written on the rough bark of a tree is as dear to the lover as the perfumed billet-doux, but the voice of a soft spoken sympathizing friend can deliver a love message more acceptably than the coarse tongue of a boor. I had spent the day in planning a *coup d'etat* that would relieve me of Turner's presence, and give me the ear of the First Owner. I determined to appeal to the Englishman's sympathies and to pledge him my word of honor that if he would sell me the



chair at his own price, at midnight he should again be its possessor.

I found him in a mellow mood owing, probably, to the bottle which stood empty upon his table. Had undue advantage been taken of his condition, I might have become permanent owner of the chair. As it was, he willingly acceded to my proposition and generously left me alone with the chair, wishing me a " 'appy 'our with the First 'Honer.' "

While he bent his steps toward the nearest saloon, I waited in tumultuous expectation. As I became calm, I reviewed the questions that I had jotted down in my note-book—subjects which I was anxious to discuss, not only with the Judge, but with the First Owner. The list may still be found on the yellow leaves of my note-book.

Does the love of a disembodied spirit for a friend differ from that which he experienced when in the mortal body?

If you could, would you return to the physical body?

Do spirits know the troubles and anxieties of their friends on earth?



Have spirits knowledge of the future?

Can anything be done by those in the flesh to increase the happiness of spirit friends?

How do spirits attain the highest development?

How can I live here so as to be on your plane when we meet in the spirit world?

Would a full knowledge of spirit life benefit those in our world?

Are we finding the truth in our search for it on earth?

Have you——

I glanced toward the chair, and beheld its First Owner in possession.

As of old, he saluted me in a quiet, fatherly tone.

"I was detained," he said, looking at the clock, "but we have still a few moments in which I am at your service. As the time is short," he continued, "I will say, I know the object of your visit and all that has occurred in your life during all the years since our last interview."

I made a hurried response in which I ex-



pressed my gratification at again seeing him, and asked, "Is Judge Bennett here?"

"No," was the answer, "concentrate your mind on him and desire his presence if you would assist me in calling him."

I silently endeavored to comply with his request.

Only a moment elapsed when he said, "Judge Bennett is here, and desires me to say he was taken from you that he might sooner perfect that which was highest and holiest in himself, and that his sentiments toward you while in the body were as chaff to wheat compared with what they now are. He requests a message from you."

"Ask him if he can read my thoughts, or must I speak them?"

"Under certain conditions thought in the earthly body may be perfectly interpreted by those in the spirit body, but in this instance words would be more satisfactory."

I hesitated. What words could I use through another to assure the Judge of my undying affection?

The First Owner observing my embarrass-



ment, said kindly, "I know what is in your heart. Shall I tell the Judge?"

"Tell him," I said, drawing a breath of relief.

"The Judge is satisfied, he awaits your commands."

"Commands," I repeated, "tell him he must command me. What can I do that would be most pleasing to him?"

"Whatever your inner consciousness tells you is right at all times and under all circumstances," was the prompt response.

Suddenly poor Nathan's case rose before me, and I was silent for a moment. The conflict in my mind was short, but decisive. Love triumphed.

"I will try," I murmured.

The First Owner looked his approval. Then a remarkable thing happened. The heavy voice of the Judge, full of strange pathos, seemed to fill the room.

"Frank, warn the young to steer clear of the rock on which my life was wrecked. Restitution can not be made in a day."



I knew to what episode in his life he referred, and I shuddered at the recollection of the retribution that overtook him. Above all, was I startled by the sound of his voice. This evidence of his presence overcame me. I trembled visibly.

"If I could but see you, I would be happy," I faltered.

The First Owner hastened to comfort me.

"You will see him some time; you will learn the conditions. He is no longer here. He was permitted to come to deliver his message to you, and was immediately called away. He is devoted to your advancement along the lines which occupy him."

"What are they?" I questioned.

"The things important to his spiritual welfare which he neglected while on earth."

I was silent. My eyes directly fell upon the list of questions I held in my hand. The First Owner's glance followed mine.

"Could you answer any of them?" I ventured to say.

"I think I could did time permit, but not so



that a mortal could fully understand. You must become spiritual and familiar with the law that governs the spirit to have a clear apprehension of the things you desire to know.

"You may begin at once to learn that which is necessary for your soul's good by inquiring of the spirit within. The kingdom of heaven is within you. Even in Turner, steeped in ignorance and inebriety as he is, the spirit divine is beginning to stir. It is to him I have been sent to minister."

Why not to me? Is Turner of more consequence? Were my unspoken thoughts.

To my surprise an audible answer came from the occupant of the chair.

"Heaven has no favorites. I have done what I could for you. Your questions indicate the trend of your mind. The last in the list shows you to be a sincere seeker after truth. You will be rewarded. All who seek truth ultimately find it. Prove these things by the law of righteousness within. Truth is only found when the soul is in touch with Infinite Love. He who is 'the way, the truth and the life,' woos all souls."



The last words had scarcely passed his lips, when the dial's hands closed on the midnight hour, the white flame flashed with dazzling brilliancy, and the First Owner was gone.



## CHAPTER LXI.

Favoring circumstances enabled me to conceal from the family my nocturnal visits to Turner.

Two days had elapsed since the arrival of Grace's cousin. His calls upon her had been frequent, and he seldom failed to ask for Bernie. On one of these occasions she was out with mamma and myself, and on our return, Miss Gay called me aside and said "Grace's cousin came especially to see Bernie, but as she was not in, he said, with her mamma's permission, he would call upon her again this afternoon. I assumed the responsibility of assuring him he would be welcome. But, Mrs. Frank, there is no doubt in my mind about his intentions. I think he will ask Bernie's hand in marriage."

"It can't be possible, Miss Gay. They are but strangers to each other."

"He is fascinated with her, and is a man of impulse. Grace says he asked her if Mr. Gale



was Bernie's lover, and when she told him 'no,' he said, 'Thank God!' She says he proposes to return to Germany by the next steamer and take her with him, and put her in school if she so desires. She has decided to go. Marie, poor child, will find it hard to give her up. She has failed surprisingly since I was last here. But she is ripe for heaven—Marie is ripe for heaven," she repeated softly, as the door opened to admit visitors.

Soon afterward when I informed Marie of Grace's determination to accompany her cousin to Germany, she was quite overcome. Her lips quivered and she closed her eyes, as she lay still, unable to express her feelings.

"It is best for Grace to go, I know," she said presently, with a pitiful quaver in her voice. "It is selfish to want to keep her."

Grace came into the room. "Grace, dear," said Marie, "Sister Frank tells me you are going away from me. What message shall I take from you to William when I meet him?"

Grace stared at her. "I don't know what you mean."



"When you have gone, I shall go to William, and I want you to send him some word."

"Do you mean you shall die?" questioned Grace, with an expression of horror on her countenance.

"Don't look so frightened," said Marie, with a reassuring smile. "I think I shall go before very long. I saw William beckoning to me last night in my dreams. Shall I tell him you will always try to be good?"

"If you die and go where William is, you may tell him that, for it won't do no harm for me to try to be good. I never will be good unless I try. But, I don't want you to die when I'm gone," she continued in a broken voice, "what will become of them poor folks you are helping?"

"I shall ask mamma to give them all my flowers and my money and everything I have. I have already made a list of things that mamma is willing I should give away before I go, and Mr. Booth has promised to distribute them this week. The list is under my pillow, and when I put it there last night, my headache went away, and my rest was sweet."



"You see," the generous girl explained, "thinking about the poor had given me the headache."

"Getting the headache thinking about 'em aint nothing to being awful poor folks yourself," said Grace. "I am glad I aint got to live on the little end of nothing any more," she continued, in a self-congratulatory tone. "And Sally Long won't be likely to have quite so hard a row to hoe, now old Long is off her hands. I am going to ask my cousin to give her a lift before we go, even if she was hard on me."

"That is good of you, Grace. When people try it is not hard to be good."

"It ain't hard for good folk to be good, but it is awful hard for bad folk, I can tell you," replied Grace with startling emphasis.

Miss Gay quietly announced to Bernie, at the midday meal, the intention of Mr. von Heidleburg to call upon her during the afternoon; Bernie giggled. Mr. Gale, for once, lost his presence of mind. He dropped his fork, stared blankly at the giddy girl, and scarcely spoke during the remainder of the meal. When it



was over, he did not return directly to his studio, as was his habit, but lingered near the door until Bernie passed through. Following by her side, he said a few words in a low rapid tone. They entered the parlor together and I saw no more of Bernie until after she had received the expected visit from Grace's demonstrative cousin. She came to my room trembling with excitement. "Mamma," said she "hold me! or I shall fly all to pieces. Oh, my, my, my! Mamma, would you believe it? I have two lovers—two genuine lovers! Oh, dear, what shall I do? I shall go crazy, I know!"

"Bernie, sit down and calm yourself," advised her mamma.

"Oh, I can't! I can not be calm. I've had such a time! First, Mr. Gale said—Oh, I don't know what he said, but I do know what young Germany said. He was in a frenzy, because I wouldn't promise to be his frau. I had to give him some hope or I believe he would have killed himself. Talk about the phlegmatic German! Why, when a German gets in love, he is a boiling terror. He kept getting up and



sitting down, and gesticulating, and he scattered the music, and his hands pressed his heart, and clutched his hair. I declare I was almost afraid of him when he came close and bent over me, and said with a sort of savage tenderness, 'Flower of my heart! I can not live without you!' Mamma, I admire him. I like to see a man show feeling. Now, Mr. Gale is always holding himself in. He looks unutterable things and says nothing. It is so aggravating. Girls like straightforward love-making. He acted like a man just waking up to-day, and spoke out. I suspected what was coming when he asked me to go to the parlor. I made up my mind he shouldn't think I had been waiting to fall into his arms, but I was a little confused after all, and he managed to make me partially commit myself; so did the delightful foreigner, who called later. I told them both I must consult you, and of course I didn't carry my heart on my sleeve. I don't know what to do. What shall I do, mamma?"

"Are you sure you have not decided what you will do, Bernie?"

"Oh, yes, that is—I think—I have not posi-



tively decided. It would be dreadful to leave you and dear little Gabriel to go to a foreign country to live, wouldn't it?"

"Do you think you could make such a sacrifice for either of them, Bernie?"

"I—I don't know! I might. You see, mamma, Mr. Gale told me a week ago that it was his intention to go to Italy, in the furtherance of his art, as soon as he could gather courage to take leave of a very dear friend, provided she would not consent to accompany him. Of course after what he said to-day, I know he meant me. Old Sobersides is an enigma, anyway. He isn't half as nice as Young Germany, and yet I keep thinking of him. I don't know what ails me."



## CHAPTER LXII.

Less than a week after his declaration, Bernie's German lover, with crushed hopes, sailed homeward, accompanied by his cousin Grace.

Within a month after their departure Marie lay like a white lily upon a pall of velvet, in the apartment from which William had been carried to his grave. Paralysis, which deadened all pain, and gently released her spirit, fell upon her about midnight, like soothing balm from an angel's hand.

"We thought her dying when she slept,  
And sleeping, when she died."

Sincere mourners for Marie outside of her family and friends were not wanting. News of her death brought a motley throng to the house, for her ministrations to the poor had covered a wide range. Rough-shod feet of young and old trod the soft carpets. Many an eye dropped tears upon her bier. It was Mr. Booth who took the little grimy hands of the



children in his own, and led them to view the lovely form of their benefactress, little dreaming perhaps, that another would ere long lead those same children to look upon his lifeless clay. Apparently in perfect health, he officiated at Marie's funeral. Having tenderly consigned her precious remains to their last resting place, he returned home with our family. Sad and weary, mamma, accompanied by Miss Gay, whose cheery presence was greatly appreciated, retired to her room, at an early hour of the evening.

Bernie and Mr. Gale slipped quietly away to a corner of the library. Mr. Booth and I found ourselves alone in the parlor with Gabriel, who curled up on the sofa and was soon fast asleep.

The silence that fell between us after the solemn experiences of the day, was more eloquent than words. He was first to speak.

"Frank, the world seems slipping away from me, but I thank God you are still left."

I made a deprecatory motion with my hand.

"Oh, don't misunderstand me," he hastened to say. "I am not speaking to you as a lover, but as a brother. I know of your promise;



Bernie told me. But there—over there neither marriage or giving in marriage will be known. We shall be as the angels of God."

"It is a blessed thing to possess the faith you have, Mr. Booth, but I can not yet fully grasp it. I am doubtful about everything I was taught pertaining to the world of spirits. The experience I had with the First Owner of the antique chair unsettled me. Since he told me to pray for Nathan, I have only lately tried to say my prayers. I could not forgive as I would be forgiven."

"Frank, if Nathan were to tell you he was sorry for his sin against you, could you not forgive him?"

"Certainly I could."

"Why, then, can not you ask our Father to forgive you of wrong doing of which you repent, as you would forgive Nathan, under the same conditions?"

"I can, and will, Mr. Booth. Dear Marie's never-to-be-forgotten exhortations shall be heeded. She is no longer here to pray for me. I must pray for myself. I have also promised



another to try, and I will 'arise and go to my Father.' "

Mr. Booth's face glowed with an expression of joyful surprise. He grasped my hand. "Frank, communion with the Father of your spirit will lift you to heights where angels soar. You may never know how I have longed for this hour. I felt it must come."

A new and holy bond of sympathy seemed suddenly to have been established between us—between my early idol and myself. I felt like one just returned from a strange land, where I had met with losses which were being made up to me. The nurse came for Gabriel. It was his bedtime. He awoke but insisted on sleeping with Mr. Booth, as he frequently had done. Nurse was dismissed and the boy again fell asleep. We resumed our conversation, drifting away to the time when Mr. Booth first made his home with mamma, and I was a young schoolgirl. It was the first interview of the kind we had ever had and that night's conference, knit our souls indissolubly together. The bond was of such a nature I felt sure of the approval of my de-



parted love who had so lately expressed sentiments in accord with those of my spiritual adviser. It was approaching midnight when we separated with a silent pressure of the hand.

Bernie and Mr. Gale still lingered in the library; their low voices reached me as I went to my room. Scarcely had I closed my door and dropped upon my knees, when I heard Gabriel's voice, in cries of distress. I met the little fellow running toward me in his nightgown. He caught my dress and screamed, "Mamma, come quick. Mr. Booth has falled."

I found Mr. Booth lying unconscious across his bed. He had not so much as removed his necktie, and his clerical coat was still buttoned close upon his chest, as he always wore it. Under the impression that he had fainted, I summoned Mr. Gale and Bernie. We tried every means in our power to bring him to consciousness. But in vain. His spirit had departed.

Our trusted family physician was called. When he arrived, I took Gabriel, wild with grief, by the hand and led him to my room. He sat upon my knee, his head leaning against



my breast, while I elicited from him information concerning Mr. Booth's last moments.

"He held me on his lap," sobbed Gabriel, "and kissed and kissed me before he would let me undress. When I was ready, he opened the bed and told me to jump in, but before I could do it, he fell over on it, himself. He looked so white, and I was afraid he would die like Aunt Marie. Oh, dear! oh, dear! Will Mr. Booth be put deep in the ground too?"

I drew my boy closer to my breast and kissed him passionately. "Oh, mamma, you don't kiss me yet as hard as Mr. Booth did, and you don't tell me you love me."

"Mamma loves you, Gabriel, better than anyone else in the world. She loves you when she doesn't tell."

"I like to be told," murmured the boy, now almost asleep.

I sat with him in my arms not seeming to possess the power to move, until mamma came to my room. She said that Dr. Jones could not account for Mr. Booth's sudden death, and had proposed an autopsy. After



mamma followed Bernie and Miss Gay. The latter promptly took Gabriel from me and said:

"Thee must rest. Thy pale face should lie upon thy pillow, and thy staring eyes be closed at once."

"I will say, as Marie used to, if I must, I must," and I made an attempt to rise but fell back in my chair, dizzy and trembling. Mamma went for Dr. Jones.



## CHAPTER LXIII.

"Nervous prostration," pronounced Dr. Jones, and I was kept in bed until Mr. Booth's funeral had taken place, and the household was again settled. Mamma watched over me with great anxiety. It happened one day that the doctor came when I was supposed to be asleep; he and mamma conversed in low tones in the adjoining room.

"Mr. Booth's was a most remarkable case," I heard the doctor say. "The autopsy disclosed a singular condition of the heart. It was enlarged and I could plainly see traced upon its swollen surface, in bluish fibres, the exact outlines of the features of Frank's face."

"How he must have loved her!" said mamma. "It is as wonderful as the story of the stigma which St. Francis is said to have received."

"It is unaccountable — unaccountable," repeated the doctor. "The theory you advance



as the cause of the phenomenon is opposed to reason and science. The outline of the features must have been merely a chance coincidence. It might be well not to mention the matter to Frank, at least, not just now," suggested the wise medical adviser.

"Of course, I would not."

Improvement in my health was rather discouraging and the doctor prescribed short mid-day drives. I visited Shady Alley to inquire into the welfare of Sally Long. She spied me from her window and throwing her apron over her head, came out to the carriage.

"Howdy," was her greeting. "You look awful sick, Miss Bennett."

"You are not looking in good health, yourself," I replied.

"O, I've been dreadful sick, Miss Bennett."

"What has been the matter?"

"I've hed—I've hed—I've hed—I declare I've been so sick I don't know what I've hed. But Miss Plackett does," she added in an encouraging tone.

"Can I be of service to you?" I asked.

Sally pressed closer to the carriage and



lowered her voice, not knowing that the coachman was rather deaf.

"Ef I hed a weddin' dress," said she, "I b'lieve I'd git married. I aint been a widder long, I know, and it seems like dancin' on the old man's grave, but circumstances is peculiar. A cattle feller by the name of Turner cum this mornin' to git the ole man to work fer 'im. He hed been to England an' hedn't heard the ole man was dead. He says he's awful lonesome since his chum what used to cum and set in a square ole cheer, he's got, don't cum no more, an' he wants me to marry him. He's a waitin' in thar now fer me to say yes er no."

"Are his habits good?" I said, to put the poor woman on her guard.

"Well, middlin'. He drinks periodic, but he sleeps it off and he makes lots of money buyin' cattle. I know it's risky to take him, but everything in this world is risky, I reckon."

"I have met Mr. Turner," I said, "and I wish you would ask him to come out; I want to speak to him a moment."

Turner was promptly called and, being questioned, informed me that the First Owner of the



antique chair had not appeared in it since the night of Mr. Booth's death.

"'E told me," said Turner, "the last of 'is race was passing hover, hand 'e would be relieved from the bondage of the chair. 'E 'ad no more than said it, when the white flame blazed up, and 'e was gone. And 'e 'as not come back."

"Well, I never heard such stuff as that," said Sally Long. "I'm afeered of ghosts."

Turner looked a little discouraged as he turned to go into the house.

"I will not keep you any longer in the cold," I said to Sally, "but if you should need it let me know, and I will send you the wedding dress."

"You might send it and take the risk," said Sally.

As the carriage turned away, Sally called out, "There's a sick ole Jew in that tumble down shanty across the alley what's suffrin' fer vittles."

I thought of Marie, of Gabriel Booth, of the promise made to one in the spirit world, and decided to visit the Jew. I looked in and saw



—an old man shivering, girded about with the ragged remnant of blanket. As he raised his hands toward heaven, and said, “God, poor and needy I stand,” his tall figure swayed, and he fell upon the pallet of straw, which lay upon the floor. Here indeed was extreme poverty. Midwinter and no fire, frost upon the windows and one ragged blanket covering the shivering form as it lay upon the hard bed.

He raised his shaggy head and I recognized the pinched and wrinkled face, the hooked nose and piercing eyes of Nathan. We had never met since he so long ago sold me the fateful chair, yet he knew me at once.

“Have you, too, come to upbraid me?” he asked in hollow tones. “I am consumed with remorse. The God of my fathers has forsaken me. I have lived by cheating. The chair was my ruin. I heeded not the warnings of its spirit owner. I loved money too well. Now I am left to starve——”

I interrupted the poor wretch. “Let me speak! You shall have food and be cared for.”

“Shall I be forgiven? Will you pray for me?”



"You are forgiven; I do pray for you," I responded. It was then and only then that peace profound began to reign in my soul.

An expression of restfulness, such as is only seen in the faces of the dead and dying, overspread his features. I knew that poverty and riches were now alike indifferent to him and stayed with him until his soul had taken its flight. With his last breath his lips moved and I bent my head to listen. Either he or a voice for him, said softly, "The flame of mercy always burns."

Next day I learned that Turner's house had caught fire while he was at the Widow Long's, and, with the antique chair in it, was burned to ashes.

Bernie's marriage to Mr. Gale took place in the early autumn and the happy couple went abroad, visiting Germany during their tour. One of Bernie's letters from Baden-Baden, contained the following:

"Grace is here for an outing. She is now the affianced of her cousin, Young Germany, and handsome and haughty as can be. Miss Gay is also here. She says 'Thee and thy



mamma and little Gabriel must join us too.' We are all so happy. I know you will say when you read this, as you have so often said to me, 'God is merciful.' "

As I sat idly holding the letter in my hand, and dreamily pondered the last clause, a vision of the First Owner in the antique chair rose before me and I seemed again to hear him say, "The white flame of mercy always burns."

There is but one power, God power, and God is love, therefore the white flame of mercy always burns.



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